NEWS RELEASE

from

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY DIVISION

STEVE HARMON, Chief

WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES BLDG.
400 ROYAL STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

EDITOR: Approximately 70 Per Cent of Your Readers Hunt or Fish. This Message is of Interest to Them.

Release Date: IMMEDIATE 9/7/67

Leslie L. Glasgow, director of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, today disclosed a letter of reply to John R. Lambert, Jr., chairman of the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission, replying to his statements that the commission had not complied with a Legislative resolution adopted on July 28, relative to Lake Pontchartrain.

The letter follows:

September 7, 1967

Mr. John R. Lambert, Jr., Chairman
Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission
P. O. Box 9203
Metairie, Louisiana 70005

Dear Sir:

This is in regard to your letter dated September 5, 1967, and your statements released to the news media at the same time implying that the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission has not complied with Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4 adopted by the Louisiana Legislature on July 28, 1967, relative to Lake Pontchartrain.

We wish to advise you at this time that your statements in regard to this matter are completely erroneous. If you had extended us the simple courtesy of telephoning or visiting this office to inquire about what is being done we would have been more than happy to have explained in detail the steps that have been taken.

For your information the following has been accomplished by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission with respect to implementing Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4 dated July 28, 1967.

1.) Initial action was taken on July 31, 1967, two days after the passing of the Resolution when a meeting was held to determine proper procedures for implementing Resolution No. 4.

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2.) By August 1, letters had gone to all principal operators in Lake Pontchartrain including all shell operators and other companies informing them of the requirements of Resolution No. 4 and requesting that they furnish us with information concerning the number, names and docking locations of all vessels operating in the Lake so that they might be inspected by this department.

3.) The inspection system was designed to cover two principal factors concerning boat operations in the Lake. Namely: one, the conditions of vessels and their equipment and two, the number, experience, and general qualifications of the crew of each vessel.

4.) Inspection at the docks and loading sites of the various companies is being implemented at the present time. It is believed that an examination of the data obtained will indicate whether or not the average condition of all boats is acceptable or substandard and whether or not the average crew is sufficiently trained or experienced. Once this is completed, all companies having substandard equipment and/or crews will be notified and asked to rectify conditions.

5.) Certificates of insurance meeting the requirements set forth in the Resolution have been requested of all companies operating in the Lake. Many of these certificates have been received and it is expected that all companies will either comply or be barred from operation in the Lake.

6.) An opinion has been received from the Attorney General indicating that the leases now held by the various companies cannot be changed without permission of the lessees. Written requests have been made to all leaseholders asking that they grant this permission.

7.) That portion of the directive with respect to the anchoring of barges beyond three miles from the Causeway and the operation of dredges within one mile of the Causeway has been in effect since the original committee recommendations were made some time ago. The Wild Life and Fisheries personnel have from time to time reported and caused to be moved, dredges which appeared to be operating in too close proximity to the bridge. Enforcement of this portion of the Resolution can most efficiently and rapidly be done by a system of automotive patrol on the Causeway. If the Causeway Commission could see fit to allow Wild Life and Fisheries vehicles to operate on the Causeway without charge, it is believed that this portion of the enforcement procedure would be greatly enhanced.

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A careful examination of the accomplishments and activities of the Commission which have occurred during the month since the passage of Resolution No. 4 should indicate clearly that we have complied with all points of the Resolution that we were directed to carry out by the Legislature and that this activity is rapidly being put into permanent effect by the Commission.

Much issue has been made from time to time concerning the need of some type of protective patrol boat to be stationed at the bridge. While we do not intend to debate the effectiveness of such a boat, a careful examination of that section of the Concurrent Resolution dealing with a patrol boat, shows only that the Commission is authorized if necessary, to maintain and operate such a boat to carry out certain inspections which will insure the compliance of the regulations set forth in the Resolution. In our opinion all of these inspections and regulations can be better enforced by frequent dockside inspection and by random inspection from our existing patrol craft which operate in Lake Pontchartrain. To this extent, though not directed to do so, we have complied with this authorization. The only part of this section of the Concurrent Resolution which has not yet been complied with is the establishment of some type of craft to engage in rescue operations. All indications are that the establishment of such a safety patrol would be extremely costly and there would still be a moot question as to its total effectiveness. It is quite evident that at this time there are no funds in our budget to establish such a patrol boat, nor was the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission directed to set up such a patrol. With respect to this matter, we have the need and cost of such a patrol under study.

Based on the above listed accomplishments of the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, plus the fact that certain regulations had been required of the shell operators by the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission prior to the Resolution, it is obvious that your statements concerning this Commission are totally erroneous. As a matter of fact, it appears that the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission has done far more and in much less time with respect to protecting your investment than you have been able to accomplish yourself during the past ten years even though an engineering report of your own states that you could establish at least partial safety measures through your own efforts. It would appear that you have failed to even consider establishing partial protective measures through your own efforts and expense. While the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission certainly respects the life and property of all citizens and where we are more than willing to exercise our authority, equipment, personnel, time and funds in the protection of life and property both in times of catastrophe and under normal circumstances, it does not seem reasonable or conceivable in view of La. R.S. 48:1093 (13) and 48:1101 that the Causeway Commission can expect another agency to take full and final responsibility for the protection of the Causeway; particularly

when the act creating your Commission gave you the power and directed you to assume the responsibility of protecting and policing your development.

Yours truly,

/S/ Leslie L. Glasgow
Director

LLG:js

cc: Governor John J. McKeithen
Mr. James W. Thompson

Glasgow added that no funds were provided for securing of equipment for patrolling the causeway and if commission funds are used, it means that they must come from revenue received from the sportsmen of Louisiana through sales of hunting and fishing licenses.

"In effect," Glasgow concluded, "this would mean that the hunters and fishermen of Louisiana would be paying for the patrol of the causeway, diverting monies that are used in fish and game management and programs to protect wildlife resources."