

Mr. Knapp BRAC lobbies OCD-DRU Director and Task Force members to use TWIG for Watershed management



Published: 2-23-2019 Revised: 2-23-2019

Patrick Forbes received an email that he may have not seen coming. A request by a Restore Louisiana Task Force Member Adam Knapp asking to invest 10 million into the Not for Profit group called The Watershed Institute Group or TWIG for short.



From: **Adam Knapp** [mailto:knapp@brac.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2018 10:54 AM
To: **Pat Forbes** <Patrick.Forbes@LA.GOV>
Cc: INACTIVE - Mark Cooper (GOHSEP) <Mark.A.Cooper@swe.la.gov> Don Pierson <Don.Pierson@LA.GOV>
Subject: Request on the Task Force Watershed item for tomorrow

Pat,

I read the Watershed item more closely for the meeting tomorrow and want to suggest edits be. I was concerned when we granted the previous allocation of \$10m for watershed study and didn't use the Water Institute to leverage our economic development advantages there. As we prepare for tomorrow I've been thinking more about how to make use of the scientists at the Water Institute of the Gulf (TWIG) in this work. The state has invested enormous resources to build the strength of this independent science institute as a unique global leader in this space. The economic development advantages of using their skill sets makes Louisiana stronger for other federal and international work, as they continue to gain this unique experience. I was concerned after the last planning grant that we didn't directly engage them for this work, and want to find a way that we are taking advantage of their skill sets through the allocation of these resources, and the ways that make the most sense and at the same time are not competitive inappropriately to private sector players. As the Water Institute builds these resources, they also give the state an advantage of a incomparable set of knowledge, talent and capabilities that can be exported to other states and other countries. If it's own state doesn't use its own scientific experts for this purpose-built area they dominate in, it makes it more difficult to export their knowledge globally.

I've been gathering getting input to frame some thoughts of where to go on this. I think there are four areas that make sense for us to target toward the skill sets of the Water Institute that provide Restore TF and OCD/DOA with the best science. With respect to watershed issues and the Task Force, I think the Water Institute should be tasked by the State to coordinate the development of a common set of modeling standards and Quality Assurance/Quality Control activities develop a statewide Real-Time Forecasting System and develop metrics and research-based strategies for assessing community vulnerability and adaptation interventions.

From BRAC's perspective, the state is positioned to be a national and international leader in watershed-based floodplain management. The Water Institute was created as an independent, not-for-profit applied research institution to support the State to provide the best available science to inform decision-making. The science, research and innovations taking place at TWIG (along with our many partners around the state) provide us incredible economic development opportunities for Baton Rouge and the state. Because of LSU, the CPRA, State leadership and TWIG, Baton Rouge is becoming a global hub for the water sector.

As the head of a chamber of commerce and the regional EDO, our view is to that TWIG should avoid direct competition with the private sector. At the same time, we should - and Louisiana should - advance it as our first priority for scientific advancement of water related issues for Louisiana, and by doing so, further anchor our position as one of the best in the world at this type of work.

On the topic of the recommendation for tomorrow's task force meeting, we should advocate that the water Institute can support the statewide, watershed-based floodplain management program (led by OCD, DOTD, CPRA, GOHSEP, and LDWF) by providing independent scientific and technical advice and avoid competition with the private sector by:

Coordinating the development of a common set of modeling standards

- Provide the State with Quality Assurance / Quality Control services
- Develop a statewide flood Real-Time Forecasting (RTF) System
- Develop metrics and research-based strategies for assessing community vulnerability and adaptation interventions.

A RTF system would be a tremendous asset to emergency / first responders at the local level and to all state agencies involved in flood protection and response. The RTF system could be used by relevant parish personnel as well as at the state Emergency Operations Center. Such a RTF system would build upon the State's national/international reputation of using the best science in the world to address its water challenges.

As a matter of policy, our task force should direct the Water Institute to assist the state with this effort while at the same time staying in its scientific/technical "lane".

- While it has the capabilities, TWIG does not want to and should not do the modeling work of the watersheds across the state—that work should be done by private sector engineering firms.
- The Institute should leverage the work it has done for the coastal program (including the RTF system we developed for CPRA's Diversion Program).

I'd like your advice and guidance on ways to amend the recommendation tomorrow to best marry the state's investment in creating TWIG with the Watershed proposal for tomorrow and recommendations I've noted above. Alternately, I think the committee could pass a companion resolution to direct staff to use TWIG for the above, stating the policy goals for leveraging the institute's skills and scientific leadership for these areas of the Task Force's watershed work.

Let's talk when you have a moment.

Adam

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(225) 278-3708

Resource:

- Email: [2018.04.12.16.49.00-FW-Request on the Task Force Watershed item for tomorrow.pdf](#)
- Website: [BRAC.ORG Adam Knapp CEO](#)
- Added OCD-DRU Directors response:

From: Pat Forbes
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2018 5:55 PM
To: Adam Knapp
Cc: INACTIVE - Mark Cooper (GOHSEP); Don Pierson
Subject: RE: Request on the Task Force Watershed item for tomorrow

Thanks for your note, Adam. Per our discussion, we recognize the value the Water Institute brings to the state and we fully expect to use them for many aspects of the program. I agree they have some unique, world-class capabilities and can contribute greatly to our effort. The issue is more one of timing. We are not yet at the phase of the program where we can make determinations about what will be needed, much less who will be best equipped to provide those services. We are engaging them on our Model Standards Technical Assistance Committee, which will be responsible for developing standards for hydraulic and hydrologic models across the state for use in the watershed-based floodplain management program. I look forward to discussing further with you. See you tomorrow.

- Continued discussion between Mr. Knapp and OCD-DRU Director Patrick Forbes.

From: Adam Knapp <knapp@brac.org>
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2018 7:31 AM
To: Pat Forbes
Cc: Don Pierson
Subject: Restore LA TF resolution - Water ED
Attachments: 20180412 Restore LA TF resolution - Water ED.docx

Pat – Here's a quick concept for a resolution per our conversation to express the support of the task force for the new LWCA to embrace the use of the state's research centers in manners that boost the scientific and technical capabilities of Louisiana's water research centers with its funding for watershed floodplain management. Does this work?

Resource: Attachment: 20180412 Restore LA TF resolution - Water ED.docx

Proposed Resolution of the Restore LA Task Force

Prioritize investment to advance watershed-based floodplain science in Louisiana

Whereas, Louisiana seeks to create a safer state for its citizens who are living in proximity to water,

Whereas, Louisiana will invest billions of dollars of CDBG-DR and HMGP resources for the protection, sustainability and resilience of the state through advanced floodplain management;

Whereas, Louisiana has invested and is continuing to invest significant dollars in creating organizations such as The Water Institute of the Gulf and university centers that build the state's strength as a unique, global leader in water management;

Whereas, Louisiana has an opportunity to develop capabilities through this Louisiana's nonprofit research institutes and universities to advance the science, knowledge and capabilities of Louisiana for Louisiana that develop cutting edge, innovative capabilities that can become tools to help the world, and position its institutes to be more competitive for additional federal and international work;

Whereas, Louisiana is positioned to be a national and international leader in watershed-based floodplain management;

Whereas, the state should advance as a top strategic priority the scientific advancement of water-related innovation for Louisiana in a manner that also respects that non-profit research centers and universities should avoid direct competition with the private sector;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Restore Louisiana Task Force strongly encourages that the newly formed Louisiana Watershed Coordinated Agencies (LWCA) seek to further Louisiana's competitiveness in watershed based floodplain management by prioritizing the use of their state and federal resources at Louisiana's independent, not-for-profit, scientific research institutes such as The Water Institute of the Gulf and at other, similar water management research centers that currently exist at its public and private research universities. Further, these state and federal investments should seek to leverage their independent scientific and technical advice and avoid competition with the private sector for capabilities including but not limited to:

- Coordinating the development of a common set of modeling standards;
- Providing the State with Quality Assurance / Quality Control services;
- Developing a statewide flood Real-Time Forecasting (RTF) System; and
- Developing metrics and research-based strategies for assessing community vulnerability and adaptation interventions.

Further, the Task Force encourages quarterly or semi-annual public reporting to the Task Force, Governor, Legislature, and online to demonstrate progress toward the goals stated above

[Document ends]

Resources:

- Email and Attachment: [2018.04.13.07.31.00-Restore LA TF resolution-Water ED.pdf](#)

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Published: 2-23-2019 Revised: 2-23-2019

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