Gov. Edwards Creates Resilient Louisiana Commission

April 16, 2020

Panel to focus on economic growth, resiliency in response to COVID-19 pandemic

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the creation of Resilient Louisiana, a state commission charged with examining Louisiana's economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic and making recommendations for more resilient business-related activities and commerce in the coming months. The 18-member panel includes Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser, and will be co-chaired by Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Don Pierson and health care leader Terrie Sterling, a Baton Rouge consultant and retired Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System executive.

"COVID-19 represents a historic challenge to our ability to respond medically and save lives, but it also represents a tremendous challenge for Louisiana's economy and the prosperity of each one of our residents," Gov. Edwards said. "For these reasons, we need a comprehensive game plan for creating a more resilient Louisiana. I'm proud of the men and women who have accepted the challenge to tackle these important issues, and to ensure that Louisiana becomes a leader for the future safety and success of our people."

"I look forward to serving on this commission to find the best possible return of our economy," Lt. Gov. Nungesser said. "We have been tested as a state before with hurricanes, floods and the 2010 oil spill, and we have always shown our resilience in our ability to come back stronger. If anyone is able to bounce back from this COVID-19 crisis, it's Louisianans."

The commission will include a task force structure dedicated to strengthening specific sectors of Louisiana's economy. Task forces will be focused on solutions for such critical sectors as Energy and Manufacturing; Health Care, including improved delivery of medical care, health equity and enhanced facilities; Tourism, including hotels, gaming and related hospitality entities; Rural Development; Education and Workforce, with attention given to the training needs of displaced workers; and Economic and Community Development, including strategies for making regions and communities more resilient in the face of future health care threats and other risks.

"Our commission's task to build a more resilient Louisiana will take a deep dive into all aspects of our economy, how sectors have been impacted and how we can safely re-energize them for long-term success in an uncertain future," commission Co-Chair Pierson said. "We have responded to many past disasters in Louisiana with a substantial degree of success. However, we all recognize that COVID-19 brings a unique and different kind of threat, and we will work as a team to create the very best practices for moving forward today and for building resiliency tomorrow."

"It is a privilege to serve the citizens of the great state of Louisiana in such unprecedented times," commission Co-Chair Sterling said. "I look forward to working with the distinguished members of the commission representing important sectors of the Louisiana economy; state officials; and other experts to support the Governor as we navigate the return of our economy in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Joining Lt. Gov. Nungesser and Co-Chairs Pierson and Sterling on the commission will be:

- State Sen. Ronnie Johns, Senate Commerce chair, designee of Louisiana Senate President Page Cortez.
- State Rep. Paula Davis, House Commerce chair, designee of Louisiana House Speaker Clay Schexnayder.
- Scott Hensgens, PAR chairman; managing partner, Breazeala, Sachse & Wilson.
- Tyron Picard, CABL chairman; founding principal, The Picard Group.
- Tim Temple, C100 Louisiana vice chair; president and CEO, Temptan LLC.
- Bill Hogan, representing Louisiana bankers; president and CEO, Century Next Bank.
- Louis Reine, representing labor unions; Louisiana AFL-CIO president.
- Michael R. LaFitte II, representing small businesses; owner, Shreveport Haberdashery.
- Walt Leger III, representing tourism; senior vice president, general counsel, New Orleans & Company.
- Ti Martin, representing restaurants; co-proprietor, Commander's Palace.
- Jade Brown-Russell, Urban League of Louisiana chair; principal, J.D. Russell Consulting.
- Sonia Perez, representing Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency-essential industry; president, AT&T Louisiana.
- Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne (ex-officio member).

- Secretary Kimberly Robinson, Louisiana Department of Revenue (ex-officio member).
- Dr. Jim Richardson, John Rhea Alumni Professor of Economics, LSU (ex-officio member).

Leaders who are named later to chair the task forces also will serve as ex-officio members of Resilient Louisiana. For more information about the commission and updates about its work, visit OpportunityLouisiana.com/ResilientLouisiana (https://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/resilientllouisiana). Additional details about commission plans and meetings will be forthcoming in the near future.

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