

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Phil Bryant announces GOMESA projects

JACKSON – Gov. Phil Bryant announced today 17 projects totaling more than \$20.85 million that will be funded through the most recent Phase II Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) disbursement. GOMESA was created in 2006 by Congress and shares leasing revenues among the four Gulf oil and gas producing States of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and their coastal political subdivisions.

“These funds will continue our efforts to protect and enhance our beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast,” Gov. Bryant said. “This latest disbursement of revenue generated by offshore energy exploration, as part of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, will facilitate projects that also continue to grow our blue economy. I appreciate our Mississippi congressional delegation for their hard work in securing this funding. This will impact Mississippi for years to come.”

The projects will be administered by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR).

“The Department of Marine Resources looks forward to administering these projects for Governor Bryant,” said MDMR Executive Director Joe Spraggins. “The projects will enhance education, research, restoration, water quality and monitoring for the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.”

GOMESA projects:

1. MDMR: ARTIFICIAL REEF CONSTRUCTION (\$1 million) – This project is identified as a priority in the MDMR’s Artificial Reef Development Plan and will deploy donated concrete material at specific locations on Katrina Key and Mississippi’s offshore artificial reefs. These deployments will provide productive habitats for inshore fish and offshore reef fish as well as benthic organisms. The Katrina Key material will also serve as a breakwater for Deer Island and the oyster aquaculture farming currently taking place in the area.
2. AUDUBON MISSISSIPPI: NATURE-BASED TOURISM WITH INCREASED MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP FOR BEACH-NESTING AND FORAGING

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SPECIES (\$300,000) - The overarching goal of this project is to safeguard and conserve beach-dependent species, including coastal birds and marine turtles, in Harrison County by educating the public. This conservation-based project will provide crucial stewardship opportunities on Mississippi's beaches and identify them as valuable habitats in our state.

3. JACKSON COUNTY: FRONT BEACH EROSION CONTROL AND RE-NOURISHMENT (\$1.9 million) - This project includes the installation of concrete swales between the seawall and existing beach walkway, allowing for storm water to be collected and conveyed through subsurface outfalls located on the Mississippi Sound. The goals of the project include increased storm protection to infrastructure, as well as overall decreased erosion.
4. CITY OF GULFPORT: COFFEE CREEK OUTFALL - (\$2 million) The project will turn the 30-foot wide outfall into a pier on the beach reducing sand erosion and include additional amenities for beachgoers to enjoy while adding a restoration potential platform for biological components.
5. WATER QUALITY COFFEE CREEK - (\$1 million) This project will install structures and technologies north of Highway 90 improving the water quality of the creek that flows into the Mississippi Sound.
6. CITY OF BILOXI: BAYVIEW AVENUE BOARDWALK and LIVING SHORELINE (\$2.9 Million) - This project will replace the rock along Bayview Avenue with boardwalk and restore part of the living shoreline which will enhance the habitat productivity of the Back Bay. This project is part of the conservation goal of the MDMR's Alternative Bulkhead Design program.
7. CITY OF BAY ST. LOUIS: WARD 6 BOAT LAUNCH, PUBLIC WATER ACCESS AND RESTROOM (\$600,000) - The project will provide public water access in Bay St. Louis and includes a public boat launch and portable restroom facility. The boat launch will be constructed near the Highway 603 and Bayou Lacroix crossing. The improvements will consist of parking, lighting docks, improved concrete boat ramp, portable and eco-friendly bathroom facility and landscaping.
8. HANCOCK COUNTY: BUCCANEER STATE PARK ENHANCEMENT (\$2 million) - This project will enhance Mississippi's only state park with direct access to the Gulf of

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Mexico. Components of this project will preserve and improve local water quality with upgrades to RV sites and improve public access to protected wetlands and upland habitat areas. The state park will have new nature trails added which will improve the education and knowledge about local coastal habitat and the natural wetland environment with the construction of an outdoor amphitheater. This venue will also create a recreational outdoor classroom to promote the importance of coastal wetland habitats.

9. CITY OF BILOXI: EAST BILOXI BOARDWALK (\$3 million) - This project will extend the existing boardwalk to 10 feet with a new design constructed to help reduce the erosion process and contribute to storm resilient infrastructure. Part of the project will consist of river sand distribution to test the ability of sand erosion.
10. HARRISON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: SEA OATS AND SAND DUNE CREATION (\$200,000) - To develop sand dunes through planting native sea oats in a form that will catch and control sand loss on Highway 90. These habitat types also contribute to storm protection and the overall conservation and habitat productivity of multiple beach-dependent species.
11. CONTAMINANT REMOVAL PROJECT- PORT OF PASCAGOULA (\$800,000) - This project entails removing lead-contaminated soil from the heart of the Port of Pascagoula. The contaminated soil will be transported to a certified disposal site.
12. INFINITY SCIENCE CENTER: ASSESSMENT RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF INFINITY LAND HOLDINGS (\$1 million) - This project is focused on landscape-scale ecosystem restoration on the highly visible land surrounding the INFINITY Science Center—located adjacent to, and complimentary to the goals of, MDMR's Coastal Preserves. Part of the project is to control invasive species in marsh land areas. Additionally, a robust educational program will be added that raises awareness of the importance of the health of our natural systems to our quality of life on the Gulf Coast.
13. MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY AND INSTITUTE FOR MARINE MAMMAL STUDIES: EVALUATION OF MARINE MAMMAL AND SEA TURTLE ABUNDANCE, POPULATION HEALTH, HABITAT DELINEATION AND RESTORATION (\$1.25 million) - To conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the effect of the freshwater incursion from the Mississippi River into the Mississippi Sound from the Bonnet

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Carré Spillway for both marine mammals and sea turtles found in our state waters.

14. MDEQ: WATER QUALITY (\$1 million) - These funds will be used as additional support for existing enhancement and water quality improvement projects on the Mississippi Gulf Coast focusing on aquatic species as well as human health.
15. USM: AQUACULTURE DEPTH CONTROL UNIT: (\$300,000) - This project will develop and utilize new technologies to automate repetitive processes to reduce manual labor costs and increase safety for the off-bottom aquaculture industry.
16. USM: WATER SAMPLING AFTER BONNET CARRÉ SPILLWAY OPENING: (\$300,000) – These funds are used to provide water samples ranging from phytoplankton to sediment transport while identifying the unique water quality signature of the Mississippi River for effects from the 2019 Bonnet Carre Spillway opening.
17. MS AQUARIUM: FISH ACQUISITION AND TRANSPORT (\$1.3 million) - These funds will be used for fish species acquisition and transport as a part of the aquarium's conservation and education program development. They will be used for hurricane protection as well.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at dmr.ms.gov.

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