



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

September 9, 2025

Re: Docket No. FD 36633, Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) – Construction and Operation Exemption – Line of Railroad in Plaquemines Parish, La.; Preliminary Environmental Consultation

Dear Agency Representative:

Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) is planning to seek authority from the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to construct and operate approximately 10 miles of new rail line in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana (the Line). The Line would be part of PPHTD's New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railroad (NOGC) Mainline Extension Project (Project). The Project would extend the existing NOGC rail line and connect the national freight rail network to the future site of the 200-acre container terminal facility known as the Louisiana Gateway Container Terminal. As part of its licensing process, the Board, through its Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA), will conduct an environmental review of the proposed rail line in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370m-11), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.), related environmental laws, and the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. Part 1105. OEA will evaluate the environmental and historic impacts that could potentially result from construction and operation of the Line.

OEA previously sent a letter to your agency on November 15, 2022 regarding Louisiana 23 Development Company, LLC's (LA 23) LA Gateway Rail Extension, which involved a similar proposal to construct and operate a new rail line in this location. LA 23 is no longer involved in the Project. PPHTD's preferred rail alignment generally follows the same route as the alignment proposed by LA 23 in 2022 but is located further south to minimize impacts to the town of Ironton.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of PPHTD's new proposal and to request information from your agency on resources under your jurisdiction, or of which you have specialized knowledge, that could be impacted by the Project. OEA asks that you identify any permits and approvals that could be required of PPHTD and any other information that could inform the development of the range of alternatives to be considered during the environmental review. The information that you provide will also help us determine what type of NEPA document should be prepared.

Description of the Project

The Project involves the construction and operation of approximately 10 miles of new rail line and an 8,000-foot siding within a 40- to 100-foot-wide right-of-way in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, near the Town of Ironton (Township 17S, Range 25E). PPHTD states that there are no support facilities, rail yards, or runarounds currently planned as part of the Project. According to PPHTD, the purpose of the Project is to build a rail corridor that connects the proposed Louisiana Gateway Container Terminal to the interstate rail network via NOGC. Should the Board approve the Line, NOGC would operate and maintain it.

Because PPHTD has only completed its initial engineering design, the appended map (Attachment 2) depicts the conceptual centerline for the proposed rail line and the project area. OEA will provide copies of more detailed maps as they become available. OEA will develop and review the final set of alternatives to be analyzed in the NEPA document in consultation with appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies; Tribes; other interested stakeholders; and the public.

Request for Initial Comments

OEA appreciates your assistance in preliminarily identifying resource areas of interest to your agency that may be affected by the Project and welcomes any additional comments. OEA respectfully requests your response by **October 9, 2025** so that we may begin to schedule and conduct any necessary follow-up activities.

Please submit comments electronically through the Board's website at www.stb.gov by clicking on the "E-Filing" link on the left side of the home page and then selecting "Environmental Comments" and referring to Docket No. FD 36633 in all correspondence, including e-filings, addressed to the Board. Brief comments may be typed in the comment field provided or comments may be attached as a separate file. All comments received will be made available to the public on the Board's website.

Alternatively, you may also send written comments to Adam Assenza, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental review, by mail to:

Adam Assenza
Surface Transportation Board (Docket No. FD 36833)
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a virtual meeting or conference call, please contact Adam Assenza at (202) 245-0301 or by email at Adam.Assenza@stb.gov. We look forward to your participation in the Board's environmental review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danielle Gosselin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Danielle Gosselin
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

- Attachment 1 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Location Map
- Attachment 2 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Study Area Map
- Attachment 3 – Agency and Tribal Distribution List



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

September 9, 2025

Bill Cassidy
U.S. Senator
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Docket No. FD 36633, Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) – Construction and Operation Exemption – Line of Railroad in Plaquemines Parish, La.; Preliminary Environmental Consultation

Dear Senator Cassidy:

Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) is planning to seek authority from the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to construct and operate approximately 10 miles of new rail line in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana (the Line). The Line would be part of PPHTD's New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railroad (NOGC) Mainline Extension Project (Project). The Project would extend the existing NOGC rail line and connect the national freight rail network to the future site of the 200-acre container terminal facility known as the Louisiana Gateway Container Terminal. As part of its licensing process, the Board, through its Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA), will conduct an environmental review of the proposed rail line in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370m-11), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.), related environmental laws, and the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. Part 1105. OEA will evaluate the environmental and historic impacts that could potentially result from construction and operation of the Line.

OEA previously sent a letter to your office on November 15, 2022 regarding Louisiana 23 Development Company, LLC's (LA 23) LA Gateway Rail Extension, which involved a similar proposal to construct and operate a new rail line in this location. LA 23 is no longer involved in the Project. PPHTD's preferred rail alignment generally follows the same route as the alignment proposed by LA 23 in 2022 but is located further south to minimize impacts to the town of Ironton.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of PPHTD's new proposal and to request information from your office on resources under your jurisdiction, or of which you have specialized knowledge, that could be impacted by the Project. OEA asks that you identify any permits and approvals that could be required of PPHTD and any other information that could

inform the development of the range of alternatives to be considered during the environmental review. The information that you provide will also help us determine what type of NEPA document should be prepared.

Description of the Proposed Rail Line

The Project involves the construction and operation of approximately 10 miles of new rail line and an 8,000-foot siding within a 40- to 100-foot-wide right-of-way in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, near the Town of Ironton (Township 17S, Range 25E). PPHTD states that there are no support facilities, rail yards, or runarounds currently planned as part of the Project. According to PPHTD, the purpose of the Project is to build a rail corridor that connects the proposed Louisiana Gateway Container Terminal to the interstate rail network via NOGC. Should the Board approve the Line, NOGC would operate and maintain it.

Because PPHTD has only completed its initial engineering design, the appended map (Attachment 2) depicts the conceptual centerline for the proposed rail line and the project area. OEA will provide copies of more detailed maps as they become available. OEA will develop and review the final set of alternatives to be analyzed in the NEPA document in consultation with appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies; Tribes; other interested stakeholders; and the public.

Request for Initial Comments

OEA appreciates your assistance in preliminarily identifying resource areas of interest to your office that may be affected by the Project and welcomes any additional comments. OEA respectfully requests your response by **October 9, 2025** so that we may begin to schedule and conduct any necessary follow-up activities.

Please submit comments electronically through the Board's website at www.stb.gov by clicking on the "E-Filing" link on the left side of the home page and then selecting "Environmental Comments" and referring to Docket No. FD 36633 in all correspondence, including e-filings, addressed to the Board. Brief comments may be typed in the comment field provided or comments may be attached as a separate file. All comments received will be made available to the public on the Board's website.

Alternatively, you may also send written comments to Adam Assenza, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental review, by mail to:

Adam Assenza
Surface Transportation Board (Docket No. FD 36833)
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a virtual meeting or conference call , please contact Adam Assenza at (202) 245-0301 or by email at Adam.Assenza@stb.gov. We look forward to your participation in the Board's environmental review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danielle Gosselin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Danielle Gosselin
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

- Attachment 1 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Location Map
- Attachment 2 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Study Area Map
- Attachment 3 – Agency and Tribal Distribution List



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

September 9, 2025

Melissa Darden
Tribal Chairman
Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
PO Box 661
Charenton, LA 70523

Re: Docket No. FD 36633, Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) – Construction and Operation Exemption – Line of Railroad in Plaquemines Parish, La.; Preliminary Environmental Consultation

Dear Chairman Darden:

Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) is planning to seek authority from the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to construct and operate approximately 10 miles of new rail line in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana (the Line). The Line would be part of PPHTD's New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railroad (NOGC) Mainline Extension Project (Project). The Project would extend the existing NOGC rail line and connect the national freight rail network to the future site of the 200-acre container terminal facility known as the Louisiana Gateway Container Terminal. As part of its licensing process, the Board, through its Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA), will conduct an environmental review of the proposed rail line in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370m-11), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.), related environmental laws, and the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. Part 1105. OEA will evaluate the environmental and historic impacts that could potentially result from construction and operation of the Line.

OEA previously sent a letter to the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana on November 15, 2022 regarding Louisiana 23 Development Company, LLC's (LA 23) LA Gateway Rail Extension, which involved a similar proposal to construct and operate a new rail line in this location. LA 23 is no longer involved in the Project. PPHTD's preferred rail alignment generally follows the same route as the alignment proposed by LA 23 in 2022 but is located further south to minimize impacts to the town of Ironton.

Description of the Proposed Rail Line

The Project involves the construction and operation of approximately 10 miles of new rail line and an 8,000-foot siding within a 40- to 100-foot-wide right-of-way in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, near the Town of Ironton (Township 17S, Range 25E). PPHTD states that there are no support facilities, rail yards, or runarounds currently planned as part of the Project. According to PPHTD, the purpose of the Project is to build a rail corridor that connects the proposed Louisiana Gateway Container Terminal to the interstate rail network via NOGC. Should the Board approve the Line, NOGC would operate and maintain it.

Because PPHTD has only completed its initial engineering design, the appended map (Attachment 2) depicts the conceptual centerline for the proposed rail line and the project area. OEA will provide copies of more detailed maps as they become available. OEA will develop and review the final set of alternatives to be analyzed in the NEPA document in consultation with appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies; Tribes; other interested stakeholders; and the public.

Request for Interest in Government-to-Government Consultation

The purpose of this letter is to advise the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana of PPHTD's new proposal and to ask whether your Tribe would be interested in consulting with OEA regarding areas of sensitivity and the potential range of impacts that may be associated with the construction and operation of the Line assessed under NEPA, including any impacts to tribal lands and resources. To assist you in responding, OEA has attached a questionnaire regarding any future involvement that your Tribe may want in the overall NEPA process (see Attachment 4 for Consultation Questionnaire).

OEA respectfully requests that you complete the questionnaire and return it to Adam Assenza, project manager for this case, at your earliest convenience. Please note that STB/OEA will reach out to your Tribe's cultural resources contact separately pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 54 U.S.C. § 306108. If you have any questions or would like to arrange a virtual meeting or conference call, please contact Adam Assenza at (202) 245-0301 or by email at Adam.Assenza@stb.gov. We look forward to your participation in the Board's environmental review process.

Sincerely,



Danielle Gosselin
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

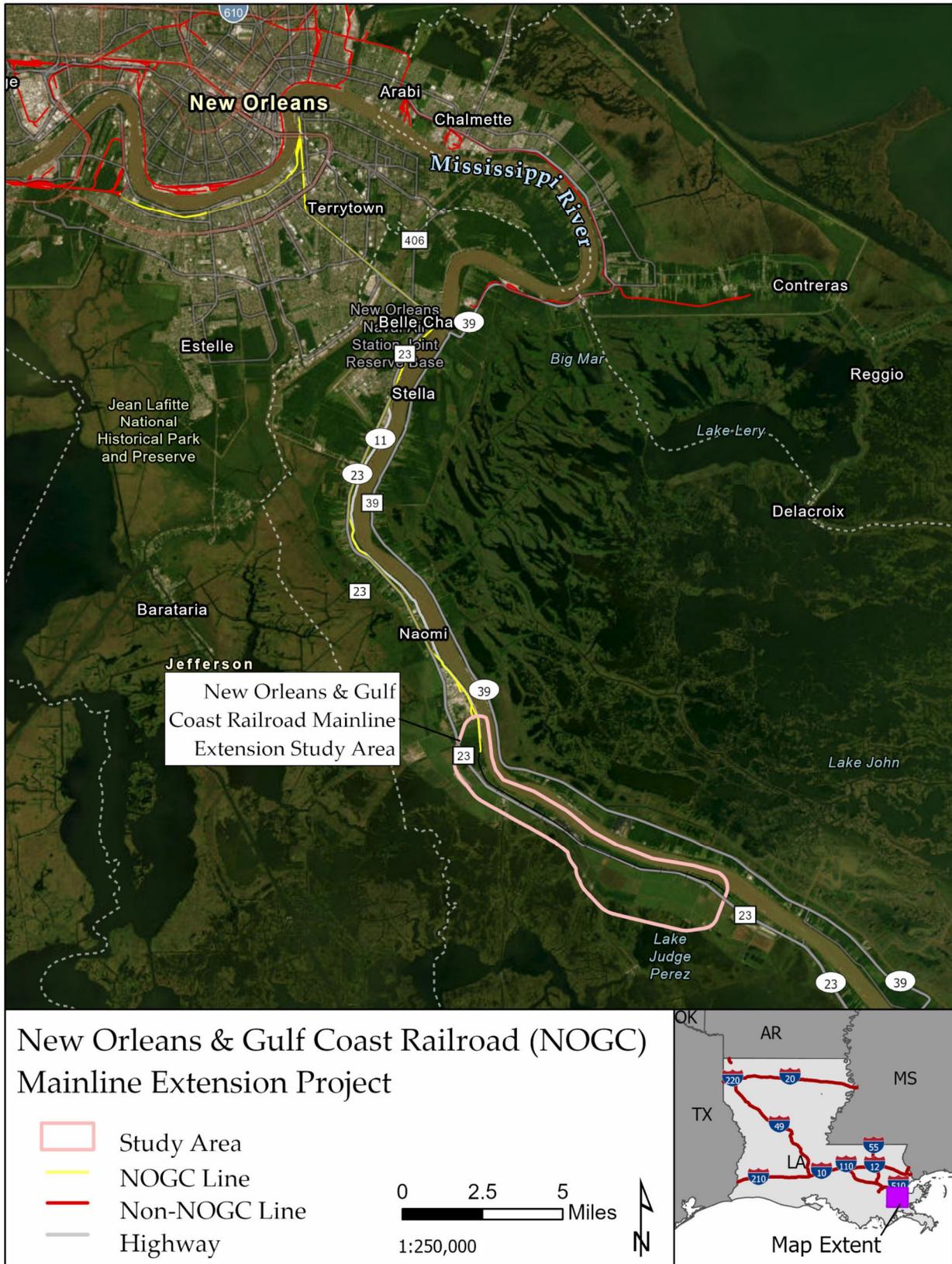
Attachment 1 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Location Map

Attachment 2 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Study Area Map

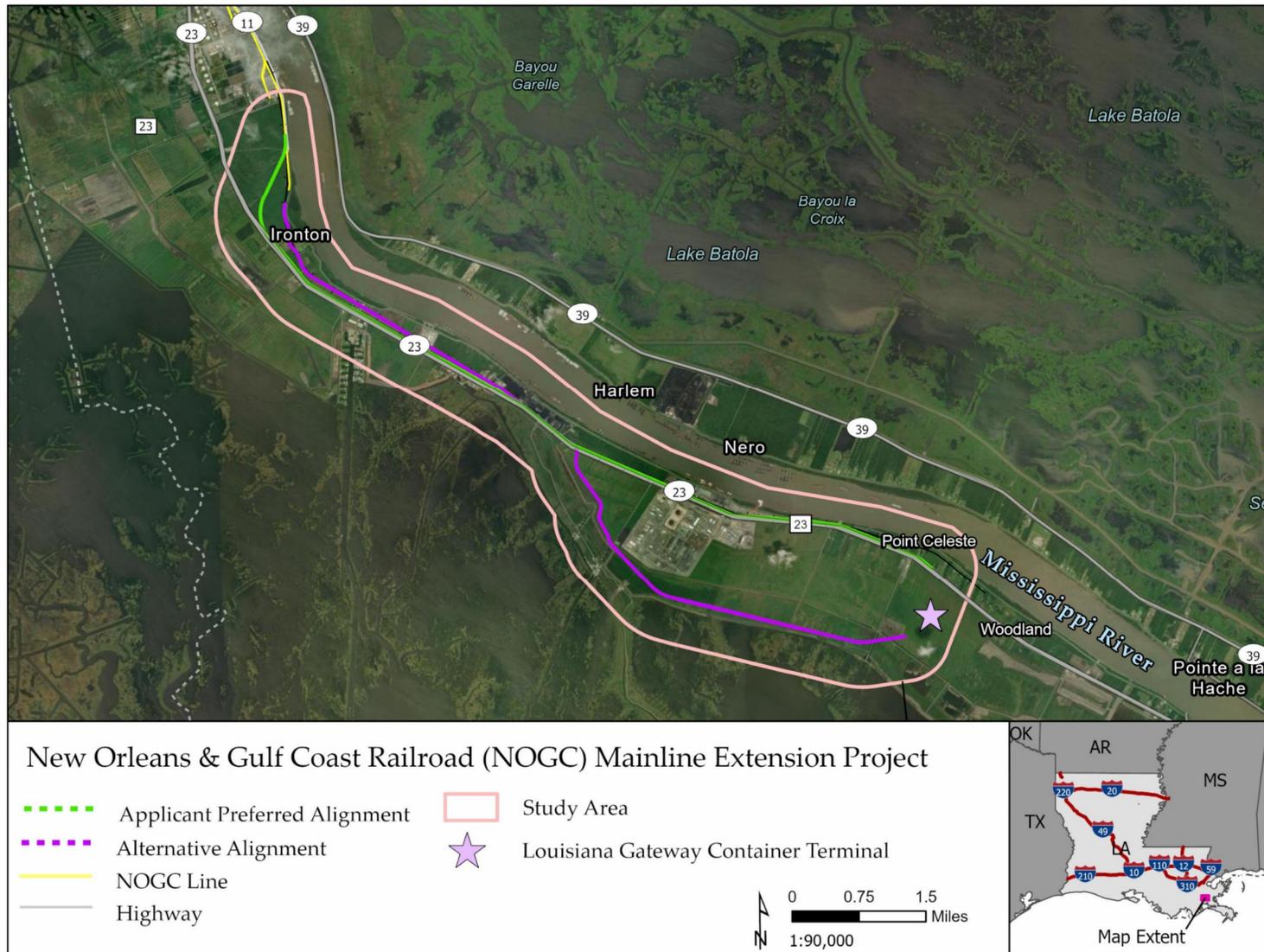
Attachment 3 – Agency and Tribal Distribution List

Attachment 4 – Tribal Consultation Questionnaire

Attachment 1 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Location Map



Attachment 2 - PPHTD NOGC Railroad Mainline Extension Project Study Area Map





SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

Attachment 3 – Initial Agency and Tribal Distribution List

Re: Docket No. FD 36633, Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) – Construction and Operation Exemption – Line of Railroad in Plaquemines Parish, La.; Preliminary Environmental Consultation

The below lists all federal, state, and local elected officials; federal, state, and local agencies; tribal nations; and school districts contacted by the Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in connection with the above referenced Docket No. FD 36633.

Federal, State, and Local Elected Officials

- United States Senator Bill Cassidy
- United States Senator John Kennedy
- United States Congressman Steve Scalise
- State Senator Robert Owen
- State Senator Gary Jr. Carter
- State Senator Patrick Connick
- State Representative Michael Bayham, Jr.
- State Representative Jacob Braud
- Kevin Conner, Chief Judge, Plaquemines Parish Courthouse
- Eric Skrmetta, Louisiana Public Service Commissioner, District 1
- Gerald Turlich, Jr., Plaquemines Parish Sheriff
- Sandy Holloway, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), District 3

Federal Agencies

- Mike Oetker, Regional Director, Southeast Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Brigitte Firmin, Field Supervisor, Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office, USFWS
- Dustin Garig, Deputy Field Supervisor, Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office, USFWS
- Cathy Breaux, Civil Works and Coastal Restoration Biologist, Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office, USFWS
- Martin Mayer, Regulatory Division Chief, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Daniel Marsalone, Lead Civil Engineer, USACE
- Amy Powell, Operations Manager, Completed Works, USACE
- Robert Houston, Staff Director, Communities, Tribes, and Environmental Assessment, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 6

- Michael Jansky, NEPA Reviewer, EPA, Region 6
- Kelli McClelland, Acting Louisiana State Conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)
- Bert Frost, Regional Director, National Park Service (NPS)
- Shachak Pe’eri, Director, National Geodetic Survey (NGS)
- Justin Barker, Manager, Southwest Region, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- John Megary, Regional Administrator, Region 5, FAA
- Eric Wilcox, Eastern Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

State Agencies

- Courtney Burdette, Secretary, Office of Coastal Management, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)
- Keith Lovell, Assistant Secretary, Office of Coastal Management, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR-OCM)
- Lawrence Rosso, Jr., Public Lands Utilization Manager, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)
- David Butler, Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, Permit Coordination, LDWF
- Jas Singh, Engineer & Operations Assistant Administrator, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)
- Nancy Atkins, Permit Specialist, District 2, Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (LADOTD)
- Mike Steele, Communications Director, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOSEP)
- Nicole Hobson-Morris, Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Louisiana State Division of Historic Preservation

Local Agencies

- W. Keith Hinkley, Parish President, Plaquemines Parish Government
- Ken Dugas, Chief Engineer, Plaquemines Parish Government
- Chairman Reverend Tyron Edwards, District 1 Representative, Plaquemines Parish Government
- Councilmember Carlton M. LaFrance, Sr., District 7 Representative, Plaquemines Parish Government
- Ametra Rose, Planning & Zoning Superintendent, Plaquemines Parish Government
- Robert Spears, Coastal Program Manager, Coastal Zone Management, Plaquemines Parish Government
- Patrick Harvey, Director, Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Robert Wingerter, Superintendent, Plaquemines Parish Drainage Department

Tribal Nations

- Melissa Darden, Chairman, Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
- Kimberly Walden, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Chitimacha Tribe of

Louisiana

- David Sickey, Chairman, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Kristian Poncho, THPO, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Elizabeth Rogers, Tribal Chief, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians
- Lillie Williamson, Tribal Chief (Designated Representative), Jena Band of Choctaw Indians
- Johnna Flynn, THPO, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians
- Marshall Pierite, Chairman, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana
- Earl Barbry, THPO, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana
- Durell Cooper, Chairman, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
- Gary Batton, Chief, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Ian Thompson, THPO, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Cyrus Ben, Chief, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- Marcellus Osceola, Chairman, Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Tina Osceola, THPO, Seminole Tribe of Florida

Schools and School Districts

- Shelley Ritz, Superintendent, Plaquemines Parish School Board
- Bobby Ingraham, District 7 Member, Plaquemines Parish School Board
- Trichina Williams, Principal, South Plaquemines High School
- Tonya Redmond, Principal, South Plaquemines Elementary School
- Holly Eiswirth, Principal, Belle Chasse Elementary School
- Kayla Clark, Principal, Belle Chasse Middle School
- Heather Lawson, Principal, Belle Chasse High School
- Maria Prout, Principal, Boothville-Venice Elementary School
- Denise Cooper, Principal, Belle Chasse Primary School
- Kristie Williams, Principal, Phoenix High School

**ATTACHMENT 4:
CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana

Re: Docket No. FD 36633, Plaquemines Port Harbor and Terminal District (PPHTD) – Construction and Operation Exemption – Line of Railroad in Plaquemines Parish, La.; Preliminary Environmental Consultation

Please check all the appropriate response(s) that apply from the list below and use the back of this form or additional sheets if you wish to make comments:

- We have no interests associated with the proposed project and further consultation with our Tribe is not required.
- We want to continue to receive project information by mail and participate in the public involvement process.
- We have an interest in the proposed project and want to participate in government-to- government consultation.

Name of the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana designated contact for the proposed project:

_____ Phone: _____
Please print E-mail: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please mail to: Adam Assenza
Surface Transportation Board, OEA
Docket No. FD 36847
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Or E-mail to: Adam.Assenza@stb.gov