

**RESTORE Council Proposed FPL 3b Amendment Bundle**  
**Response to Public Comments**  
**November 19, 2025**

On September 25, 2025, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council issued a 30-day request for public comments on proposed Council votes to approve funding for multiple ecosystem restoration activities located in Texas under Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3b. Specifically, the Council is planning to vote on whether to approve:

Proposed FPL 3b Amendment for the [Texas Coastal Water Quality Program](#):

- \$266,931 in planning funds to complete necessary water quality planning components (originally budgeted for water quality program implementation).
- \$1,000,000 in implementation funding for the Improving Baffin Bay Water Quality project (originally budgeted for water quality program implementation).

Proposed Reallocation of Unspent [Initial FPL](#) funds to FPL3b [Texas Chenier Plain Ecosystem Restoration Program](#):

This proposed reallocation would utilize a total of \$1,446,270.17 in savings from the Initial FPL that was originally approved for Texas projects (Matagorda Bay System Priority Landscape Conservation, Bayou Greenways, Bahia Grande Coastal Corridor, and Texas Beneficial Use/Marsh Restoration projects). These Initial FPL projects were completed under budget, and the savings is proposed to be reallocated to the FPL 3b Texas Chenier Plain Ecosystem Restoration Program.

- Reallocation of \$1,000,000 in previously-approved Initial FPL funding to the previously-approved FPL 3b McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge Shoreline Breakwater project for implementation.
- Reallocation of \$446,270.17 in previously-approved Initial FPL funding to the previously-approved FPL 3b J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area Levee project for implementation.

Below is a summary of all public comments received during the comment period, along with the Council's responses to these comments.

**Texas Coastal Water Quality Program**

Comment: One commenter requested the Council not approve the proposal to expend \$266,931 in water quality implementation funds for planning unless the resulting shortfall in implementation funds is addressed, based on the concern that planning is of little value without implementation.

Response: Texas remains committed to implementing multiple water quality projects under this program. Additional funding is needed to complete required environmental compliance, engineering and design to support the future implementation of the water quality program. Implementation cannot occur if adequate funding is not available to complete required planning tasks first.

Comment: One commenter recommends approving the proposed \$1 million in implementation funding for the Improving Baffin Bay Water Quality project, but only if it will not be used to construct local “pet” projects that are, in the commenter’s opinion, unrelated to the actual water quality problems. The commenter states that only water quality improvement projects that clearly address water quality problems be approved.

Response: The Council appreciates the commenter’s support for water quality projects for Baffin Bay. Under the Improving Baffin Bay Water Quality project, well established nonpoint source pollution best management practices will be implemented on farms and ranches to address nutrient and fecal bacteria pollution to improve Baffin Bay water quality in accordance with the Texas State Soil Water Conservation Board’s Water Quality Management Plan Program.

Comment: Thirty-eight commenters offered strong support for the proposed approval of funding for the Texas Water Quality program through implementation of the proposed Improving Baffin Bay Water Quality project. Commenters cite that Baffin Bay is often overlooked for restoration funding, but is the “jewel of the Texas Coast” and is in critical need of efforts to restore water quality by addressing nutrient and bacterial pollution problems stemming from agriculture. They support funding for the Improving Baffin Bay Water Quality project as they believe this effort will build on a proven partnership that connects farmers with Harte Research Institute, the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board, and local Soil & Water Conservation Districts and will make measurable progress to reduce agricultural runoff that degrades Baffin Bay and its tributaries. Support is also expressed for potential future construction of a 240-acre treatment wetland on Petronila Creek, one of Baffin Bay’s agriculture-influenced tributaries.

Response: The Council appreciates the strong support expressed for proposed approval of funding to support the Texas Water Quality Program and proposed efforts to restore water quality in Baffin Bay.

### **Texas Chenier Plain Ecosystem Restoration Program**

Comment: One commenter expressed strong support for McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge Shoreline Breakwater project and the J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area Levee project. This commenter supports the Council’s proposed reallocation of funding to the Texas Chenier Plain Program from savings that the Council realized from the Initial FPL and congratulations the Council, TCEQ and local partners for bringing important projects in Texas to completion under budget.

Response: The Council appreciates the input and support for these two Chenier Plain Program projects and the positive acknowledgement of multiple Texas Initial FPL projects being successfully completed under budget.

Comment: One commenter offered that no details were provided regarding the proposed McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge Shoreline Breakwater project. The commenter also encouraged the Council to not fund the project if it proposes to construct rock breakwaters in the nearshore Gulf, off the Gulf beach citing that such projects have altered sand transport and deposition in the littoral drift.

Response: Details regarding the McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge Shoreline Breakwater project were provided for public review in both the [Full Notice for Public Comments on Proposed Funding Approvals](#) and in the 198 pages of associated [supporting environmental compliance documentation](#) that were included with the notice. These documents provide a description of the project, a NEPA Final Environmental Assessment, two NEPA Finding of No Significant Impacts, a copy of the issued U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit with associated engineering and design plans, and a copy of the Texas Coastal Management Program consistency document from the Texas General Land Office. This project will construct breakwaters along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway not offshore along the Gulf beach.

Comment: One commenter requested that the Council not approve the proposal to allocate funding to repair levees on the J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area (JDMWMA) citing that project involves an artificial coastal wetland impoundment that completely severed the connectivity of this marsh with the nearby estuary. The commenter further states that while the project may have benefits for some species, it is a terrible approach to ecological management of coastal wetlands.

Response: The Council believes there are benefits to maintaining Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) existing wildlife management compartments on the JDMWMA. The JDMWMA is part of the Salt Bayou Marsh complex, an extensive brackish and intermediate marsh comprising over 83,000 acres that provides valuable fish and wildlife habitat and coastal resilience through buffering storm surge for neighboring communities and nationally significant petrochemical facilities. The construction of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway during the 1930's, along with other modifications such as channel straightening and deepening, have significantly altered the natural hydrology, overland flow, and tidal influence to this system. This wetland compartment maintenance will allow TPWD to continue to optimize water-level management on a seasonal and annual basis to help restore and maintain the historic fresh, intermediate, and brackish plant communities allowing for a diversity of wetland wildlife to thrive.

## **General Comments**

Comment: One commenter requests that actual details be provided for the public to review in order to provide comments.

Response: Details for the public to review were provided in the [Full Notice for Public Comments on Proposed Funding Approvals](#) and the associated environmental compliance documentation for the [Improving Baffin Bay Water Quality Project](#), the [McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge Shoreline Breakwater Project](#), and the [J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area Levee Project](#).

Comment: One commenter expressed support for the program and proposal.

Response: The Council appreciates the input and support.