

Minutes of a special meeting of the Plaquemines Parish Council, held in the Belle Chasse Council Chambers, 333 F. Edward Hebert Blvd., Bldg. 203, Belle Chasse, Louisiana on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 3:44 p.m., pursuant to notice to all members with a quorum present as follows:

PRESENT: Council Member Carlton M. LaFrance, Sr., Chairman
Council Member Tyronne Edwards
Council Member Brian Champagne
Council Member Chris Schulz
Council Member Patricia L. McCarty
Council Member Ronnie Newsom
Council Member Mitch Jurisich

Kim M. Toups, Council Secretary

ABSENT: Council Member Stuart J. Guey
Council Member Mark Cognevich

The Prayer was led by Council Member Edwards and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Champagne.

Council Member Cognevich moved to Agenda Item 2, "Introduction of Ordinances and Resolutions". Without objection, so ordered. The following legislation was introduced:

1. A Resolution ordering and calling a special election to be held in the Parish of Plaquemines, State of Louisiana, to authorize the continuation, levy and collection of Special Taxes therein; Making application to the State Bond Commission and providing for other matters in connection therewith. COUNCIL MEMBER LAFRANCE
2. A Resolution urging Governor Edwards to declare an Emergency Declaration of Disaster for the Shrimping Industry; and otherwise to provide with respect thereto. COUNCIL MEMBER LAFRANCE
3. An Ordinance to amend the Five Year Capital Improvements Plan, Relocation-Port Sulphur 20" Water Main Project; and otherwise to provide with respect thereto. COUNCIL MEMBER LAFRANCE

Council Member Cognevich moved to Agenda Item 3, "New Business". Without objection, so ordered.

Under Agenda Item 3a, "Introduction of Resolutions wherein Suspension is being sought", Council Member Jurisich offered a Motion to Suspend the Rules to add an item to today's agenda for consideration titled "A Resolution finding that an economic and cultural disaster, and potentially adverse health effects, exist in the Parish of Plaquemines as a result of foreign shrimp imports and dumping into the United States of America; and further, respectfully requesting that Governor John Bel Edwards of the State Louisiana use all of his constitutional and statutory powers to mitigate or, if possible, eliminate the harms caused by foreign shrimp imports and dumping; and otherwise to provide with respect thereto". A unanimous second was made by all Council Member present. On roll call, all members present voting "YES", except Council Members Guey and Cognevich who were "ABSENT", the Motion to Suspend the Rules was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 23-234

On motion of Council Member Jurisich, with a unanimous second, and on roll call all members present and voting "YES", except Council Members Guey and Cognevich who were "ABSENT", the following Resolution was adopted:

A Resolution finding that an economic and cultural disaster, and potentially adverse health effects, exist in the Parish of Plaquemines as a result of foreign shrimp imports and dumping into the United States of America; and further, respectfully

requesting that Governor John Bel Edwards of the State Louisiana use all of his constitutional and statutory powers to mitigate or, if possible, eliminate the harms caused by foreign shrimp imports and dumping; and otherwise to provide with respect thereto.

DIGEST: This Resolution finds that an economic and cultural, and potentially adverse health effects, exist in the Parish of Plaquemines as a result of foreign shrimp imports and dumping into the United States of America and also requests that Governor John Bel Edwards use all of his constitutional and statutory powers to mitigate or, if possible, eliminate the harms caused by foreign shrimp imports and dumping. *The digest is for informational purposes only and is superseded by the language of the actual ordinance or resolution.*

WHEREAS, the fisheries industry is an economic and cultural cornerstone of Louisiana, which according to Wildlife and Fisheries data accounts for an annual average of 89.2 million pounds of wild-caught shrimp; and

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana has issued 5303 commercial fisheries licenses, underscoring the significance of the fisheries industry in Louisiana, where one (1) out of every seventy (70) jobs is related to the seafood industry, and further many of these jobs are in family-owned-and-operated companies that have worked for generations to bring the finest seafood to the tables of the world; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's seafood industry has an annual economic impact exceeding \$2.4 billion; and

WHEREAS, since 1980, gulf states accounted for eighty-six percent (86%) of commercially wild-caught white shrimp, totaling more than 3.3 billion pounds; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the average dockside wild-caught shrimp price was valued at approximately \$6.50 per pound, which by 2014 fell to \$2.50 per pound, and has presently plummeted to approximately less than \$1.00 per pound, meanwhile today's average price of fuel is \$3.70 per gallon, while in the 1980's fuel prices averaged around 75¢ a gallon; and

WHEREAS, the American Wild-Caught Seafood Harvesters of the Gulf of Mexico are facing some of the lowest prices ever due to foreign shrimp imports and dumping in the United States from many foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, based on Section 735(b) of the Tariff Act of 1930, the International Trade Commission (ITC) in 2005 issued a determination which stated that the United States commercial fisheries industry suffered a material injury due to the import of certain non-canned warm-water shrimp and prawns from Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam, which was subsequently sold in the United States below fair market value, confirmed by the Department of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, these alarming trends faced by the American Wild-Caught Seafood Harvesters are unsustainable for Louisiana's commercial fishing industry, pushing numerous commercial seafood industry participants to the brink of financial ruin and compelling them to leave their vessels unused and docked, which in turn has caused the shuttered many docks and processors; and

WHEREAS, despite the ITC's recent unanimous affirmation of anti-dumping duty orders on imported shrimp from China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam following their third five-year review, a dire need persists for more comprehensive actions addressing the deluge of imported shrimp from Ecuador and many other foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, Ecuador has emerged as a global leader in shrimp supply growth, with exponential expansion, importing over 713 million pounds of farmed shrimp annually into the United States, surging by 54% since 2020; and

WHEREAS, the scale of Ecuador's shrimp imports to the United States has escalated by an astonishing 24% in the last year alone, exerting an undue strain on American Wild-Caught Seafood Harvesters, Docks, and Processors who find themselves entangled in the repercussions of foreign shrimp dumping; and

WHEREAS, while acknowledging Ecuador's advancements in production efficiency, genetics, and its geographic proximity to the United States, it is crucial to recognize its severe implications on the American Wild-Caught Seafood Harvesters, Docks and Processors on the gulf coast, as they grapple with the inundation of foreign shrimp, including the potential introduction of white spot disease to the Gulf of Mexico due Ecuador's shrimp farming practices; and

WHEREAS, further imported shrimp often fall short of adhering to domestic health standards i.e. a 2017 GAO report revealed that 12% of shrimp samples tested positive for unsafe drugs, with the FDA only examining a mere 1% of all seafood imports for potential issues; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) expressed grave apprehensions regarding the substantial contribution of imported shrimp and fish to the global health crisis of antibiotic resistance. There are a multitude of countries beyond those enumerated in the antidumping list contributing to this health risk, therefore it is imperative for the FDA to increase its existing capacity scrutinize all imported shrimp shipments, prior to the pandemic historical data showed that a meager two percent (2%) of all seafood underwent FDA testing, a figure that subsequently plummeted to a mere one percent (1%). This unsettling decline in testing underscores the heightened health risk posed to our people; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Commerce has exercised its discretionary authority to reduce antidumping duties applicable to Indian shrimp; and

WHEREAS, operating within the framework of the Seafood Nutrition Partnership initiative, NOAA actively supports a comprehensive seafood marketing endeavor with the goal of nurturing the consumption of U.S. seafood, which spans across both domestically sourced and imported varieties. Notably, entities of significant scale involved in seafood importation and major chain restaurants, exclusively reliant on imported shrimp, are in pursuit of a funding allocation of \$25 million annually for a span of five years, as part of their proposal submitted to NOAA; and

WHEREAS, in stark contrast to the United States numerous top-volume shrimp-importing countries to the United States have lower wages, diminished workplace safety, compromised health and environmental standards, and inferior labor practices; and

WHEREAS, the protection of American Wild-Caught Seafood Harvesters, Docks and Processors through commerce and trade policies is paramount, safeguarding them from foreign competitors, including instances of slave labor; and

WHEREAS, the economic and cultural heritage value of the shrimping industry in Louisiana cannot be overstated;

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLAQUEMINES PARISH COUNCIL THAT with the concurrence of its Parish President, it hereby finds that a disaster exists in the Parish of Plaquemines as a result of foreign shrimp imports and dumping, which has and is presently causing significant economic and cultural harms and may be causing adverse health effects to not only the Parish of Plaquemines but the entire State of Louisiana and its people.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE PLAQUEMINES PARISH COUNCIL THAT it hereby respectfully requests that Governor John Bel Edwards of the State of Louisiana use all his constitutional and statutory powers to mitigate or, if possible, eliminate the harms caused by foreign shrimp imports and dumping.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE PLAQUEMINES PARISH COUNCIL THAT the Secretary of this Council is hereby authorized and directed to immediately certify and release this Resolution and that Parish employees and officials are authorized to carry out the purpose of this Resolution, both without further reading and approval by the Plaquemines Parish Council.

There being no further business before this Council, on motion of Council Member Jurisich, seconded by Council Member Schulz, on roll call all members present voting “YES”, except Council Members Guey and Cognevich who were “ABSENT”, the meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

For a full transcript of discussions and presentations, a video of this meeting is available for viewing on the Parish website www.plaqueminesparish.com or on YouTube.