



**Mississippi GOMA Public Meeting
January 31, 2006
Mississippi State University (MSU) Coastal Research and Extension Center
(CREC)**

Large Group Evening Session

Rationale: Participants were asked to generate a list of issues that are critical to the environmental and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. Next, participants voted on the issues. The top three issues became the focus of smaller discussion groups.

Issues:

- Agency Funding (enforcement) – 4 votes
- Strengthening environmental standards (and standardizing them across the states) – 3 votes
- Coastal Hazards – 2 votes
- Development of salt domes – 0 votes
- Sustainability – overall issues, including fisheries – 4 votes
- Commercial fishing with nets – 3 votes
- Upstream concerns (nutrient loading) – 6 votes
- Water quality -- including bay issues, sewage treatment, development impacts (e.g. red clay flowing into waterbodies) – 5 votes
- Commitment and funding from federal agencies for Gulf needs – 0 votes
- Polluter pays – industry should bear burden of pollution costs – need mandates and regulations – 5 votes
- Air quality impacts on water quality – 0 votes
- Impoundment of water bodies to create reservoirs – 0 votes
- Artificial reefs – too many equal pollution – where did they go after the hurricanes? – 0 votes
- Need better balance between economic and environmental impacts (e.g. on road development decisions) – 2 votes
- More access to water quality testing results and more testing – 2 votes
- Relaxation of offsite mitigation policies for wetlands – allow more low-level suburban wetlands to be developed in exchange for the protection of high-level coastal wetlands – 3 votes
- Septic tanks (leaking into Gulf) – 1 vote
- Offshore development needs checks and balances – 1 vote
- Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) impacts on water quality – 3 votes
- Impacts from disposal of dredge material – 0 votes

Top Three Issues – Discussion Groups

Group One - Polluter Pays – Industry should pay pollution costs

Group Two - Water Quality including sedimentation and bay water quality and sewage treatment

Group Three – Upstream concerns related to nutrient loading