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## News Release

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### **Secretary Salazar Announces Interior Award of \$33 Million to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources**

*Funds help state improve coastal highway through Lafourche Parish*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA** – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced that the Department has added an additional \$24.2 million to a previously awarded \$8.8 million grant to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources to reimburse construction costs for improvements to LA Highway 1. This state highway is essential for transporting offshore oil and gas supplies to and from Louisiana’s Port Fourchon.

“I am proud that the Interior Department can support and assist Louisiana in coastal restoration and protection works such as the LA 1 Improvement Project,” Salazar said. “Helping the State take important measures in coastal improvements and hurricane preparation is extremely important to Interior.”

Located in Lafourche Parish, LA 1 is a transportation system that supports vital energy activities out of Port Fourchon where local service facilities handle 16 to 18 percent of the nation’s total supply of oil, both domestic and foreign. Additionally, the LA 1 project improves access within the parish to the Leeville Bridge and will serve as a vital hurricane evacuation route for about 30,000 people, including 8,000 offshore workers flown in from Outer Continental Shelf facilities.

This grant, awarded under the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, specifically assists the state of Louisiana in funding Phase 1A of the project, which includes a divided, two-lane, elevated highway spanning five miles between Leeville and Port Fourchon. The area is along LA Highway 1 in lower Lafourche Parish, about 60 miles south of New Orleans. When combined with other state and local phases of work, this project will result in construction of an 18 mile, divided, four-lane, fully controlled access elevated highway.

Phase 1B & C involve construction of an elevated highway, approaches and connectors from Fourchon to Leeville Bridge. Phase 1D involves a customer service

center, kiosk network, tolling equipment, and intelligent transportation systems. Phase 2 involves nine miles of two-lane, elevated highway from Leeville to Golden Meadow.

The Coastal Impact Assistance Program was established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Through the program, MMS is authorized to distribute \$250 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2010, to six eligible Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing states – Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, Mississippi, and Texas. The funding to Louisiana included \$127.5 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 and \$120.9 million for 2009 and \$119.7 million for 2010. Nineteen Coastal Political Subdivisions (parishes) share in the funding of projects outlined in the state's approved plan.

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