



CADDO PARISH COMMISSION

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March 8, 2022

Dear Legislator:

As you prepare for the upcoming 2022 Legislative Session, the Caddo Parish Commission and Parish of Caddo Administration would like to provide you with the following 2022 Legislative Priorities for the Parish of Caddo. We appreciate your assistance and all that you do for our State and, particularly, Northwest Louisiana.

Parish of Caddo/Caddo Parish Commission Legislative Priorities for 2022:

Economic Development and/or Construction Projects

- Encourage the State to review the flooding of Northwest Louisiana due to issues with the Red River and urge the Corps of Engineers to move forward with the appropriate studies and efforts to make repairs and restoration. Funds will need to be secured for completion of all required projects, approximately \$2.5M for dredging and another \$5M for repairs from the floods of 2015 and 2016. (Staff, Commissioner John Atkins/Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson)
- Encourage the State to engage the Federal Government for funding for the 1-49 Inner City Connector Project in Caddo Parish. The 1-49 Inner City Connector, the final part of the 1-49 North Project, is a vital part of the overall functionality of the entire 1-49 interstate system. The funding of the 1-49 Inner City Connector will address the "gap" issue in what we believe to be this State's most important transportation infrastructure. (Caddo Parish Commission, Commissioner Roy Burrell) (See Attached Resolution No. 5 of 2016).
- Fund appropriation for Phase 2 of the Southern University Law School. (Commissioner Steven Jackson).
- Support complete funding and legislation for the extension of LA Highway 3132 to the Caddo-Bossier Port (H.009213) and the proposed 1-69 (H.014054). (Staff)
- Continue discussions and the study for an Amtrak Passenger Train route from Dallas to Meridian via the 1-20 Corridor through Shreveport. (Staff, Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson/Commissioner Roy Burrell/Commissioner John Atkins)
- Support capital outlay funding to replace Caddo Parish's Walter B. Jacobs Nature Park. The park is over 35 years old and has provided communities with educational and recreational experiences that are highly regarded. The new facility will provide guests with a unique interactive experience while enhancing the quality of life for Caddo Parish residents and Northwest Louisiana. The project has a total estimated

cost of \$9.15M. The Parish is requesting \$6,862,500 from the State and the Parish will match 25% at \$2,287,500. (Caddo Parish Commission, Staff)

(Legislative Issues)

- Urge the State Legislature to provide funding support for the North Louisiana Crime Lab in Shreveport. (Caddo Parish Commission, Staff)
- Urge the State Legislature to identify a funding mechanism to assist various Parishes with the unfunded mandate, which has been put in place, to house 17 year-olds in Parish Juvenile Detention Centers. The current mandate will cost the Parish of Caddo approximately \$3.5 million annually. The Parish of Caddo does not have a revenue source for this expenditure. (Commissioner Stormy Gage-Watts/Commissioner John Atkins)
- Urban and Rural Broadband – a critical need for the urban and rural communities is broadband telecommunications infrastructure. The COVID-19 Pandemic identified a tremendous need for broadband infrastructure expansion for economic, education, healthcare and workforce development. Commercial competition is continually impeding broadband expansion by government subsidy. (Commissioner Roy Burrell).
- Continue State funding or consider increasing its current level of funding and research for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for its efforts in combating the Giant Salvinia plants in Cross Lake and Caddo Lake. Consider encouraging and assisting the development of alternative solutions to the Giant Salvinia plant issues such as the Louisiana Tech Study. (Staff, Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson, Commissioner Todd Hopkins)
- Identify adequate and sustainable funding for the Indigent Defender's Office. (Staff)
- Provide more flexibility to allow municipalities to **clear and/or transfer** titles of properties adjudicated over five years. Most developers will not develop without clear titles. Proper notice and due process would be appreciated. (Staff, Commissioner Steven Jackson)
- Urge the State Legislature to consider amending R.S. 46:1941.8 relative to the Children and Youth Services Advisory Boards, specifically, the underlined portions as reflected in Sections B and C (1). (See Attachment) (Commissioner Stormy Gage-Watts)
- Reduce fees associated with cost of expungement for individuals currently enrolled in a workforce development program at an accredited institution of higher education, accredited HiSet (GED Program) or any degree/certificate granting program at an institution of higher education. This will ease the financial burden for individuals to obtain jobs with higher earnings and incentivize individuals who have a criminal record to seek a higher educational attainment which results in increased citizenry productivity. (Commissioner Steven Jackson).

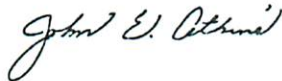
- Earmark an increase in the excise tax on “spirits” and tobacco products for higher education. (Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson)
- Review the possibility of merging Sewer and Water Districts that service same residents. This will reduce two bills into one and two boards serving the same individuals. Also, require term-limits on this board. (Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson)
- Raise the minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour over a two-year period. (Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson/Commissioner Steven Jackson)
- Increase the age for Safe Haven acceptance from 60 days to 180 days. (Commissioner Lyndon B. Johnson)
- Provide additional early voting satellite locations in Caddo Parish, along with the State’s share of the funding, to serve north, south, east and west Caddo Parish, while maintaining the current facility as the central or primary location. (Commissioner Stormy Gage-Watts, Commissioner Steven Jackson)
- Equal pay for women. (Commissioner Stormy Gage-Watts)
- Urge the State Legislature to pass a bill to support the cure for Sickle Cell Anemia Disease by replacing DNA with DTA. (Commissioner Stormy Gage-Watts)
- Veterans Issues: Remove cost for burial of spouse in State Veterans’ cemeteries. (Commissioner Ken Epperson)
- Reform Louisiana Ethics policies, procedures, collection of overdue fines. (Commissioner Ken Epperson)
- Extension of hours for voting precincts in the event of emergencies. (Commissioner Ken Epperson)
- Support water improvements for rural Caddo Parish through the Local Community Development Block Grant and other rural grants provided to local governments. (Commissioner Todd Hopkins)
- Request the Department of Motor Vehicles to consider a satellite location in West Caddo Parish. (Commissioner Ken Epperson)
- Request to allow local governments to deal with economic development projects without exposing the businesses’ names until 30 days after the deal has been finalized. (Staff)
- Reduce the length of time it takes to perfect a tax title for adjudicated property. (Commissioner John-Paul Young)
- Revise regulations related to industrial hemp to raise the acceptable level of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol). Hemp plants which contain less than .3% THC is considered acceptable as a legal commercial and agricultural product for public

consumption based on the Federal 2018 Farm Bill, and adopted by the 2019 State legislature. Because complete hemp crops that have greater than .3% THC are required to be destroyed, it creates a reluctance to plant them due to extreme financial losses among farmers because the financial obligation of the crop destruction is borne only by the farmer or grower and not shared by the manufacturer or consumer. The high concentration of the THC content (greater than the legal .3%) can be neutralized in the manufacturing process when producing CBD products for consumption which can be legislated. (Commissioner Roy Burrell)

- Allow other Louisiana higher education research institutions that have agricultural interests to have the opportunity to conduct research addressing marijuana and hemp production. Current legislation restricts these research opportunities to only historic agricultural and mechanical (A&M) universities in Louisiana such as Southern University A&M and LSU A&M. Due to the difficulties for these universities to move forward the advancement of research in marijuana and hemp production, it would be wise to share this responsibility. This expansion could create future opportunities for research collaborations, specialties and new production facilities. (Commissioner Roy Burrell)
- Provide more resources in the Department of Health and Hospitals, including medicines, testing and accurate public information, toward detection, prevention and treatment of the coronavirus in all parishes, especially Caddo Parish. These resources should also extend to all public hospitals and clinics in rural and urban communities. (Commissioner Roy Burrell)

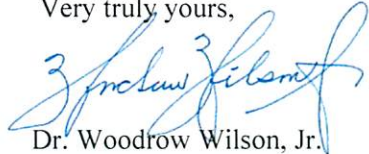
Once again, thank you for your support and your consideration of our requests. If you have questions or if you need additional information, please feel free to contact Dr. Wilson at 318.226.6900.

Very truly yours,



John E. Atkins
President
Caddo Parish Commission

Very truly yours,



Dr. Woodrow Wilson, Jr.
Administrator & CEO
Parish of Caddo

JA/WWjr.:am
Attachments

C: Mr. Ken Ward