



**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JML 24-25**

***SEWERAGE AND WATER BOARD OF NEW ORLEANS
TASK FORCE***

WHEREAS, Act No. 6 of the 1899 Extraordinary Session of the Louisiana Legislature created the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (“SWBNO”) to furnish, construct, operate, and maintain a water treatment and distribution system and a sanitary sewerage system for the city of New Orleans;

WHEREAS, in 1903, the Drainage Commission was merged with the SWBNO to consolidate drainage, water, and sewerage programs under one agency for more efficient operations;

WHEREAS, the responsibility for the New Orleans drainage system is divided between the municipal Department of Public Works and the SWBNO, thereby presenting hurdles in effective coordination and communication;

WHEREAS, the SWBNO manages critical infrastructure designed to prevent the loss of life and property damage from major flooding within the City of New Orleans;

WHEREAS, there has been a persistent concern for the SWBNO processes essential to the agency’s effective operation and the public’s trust;

WHEREAS, the SWBNO continues to over-bill its customers, as detailed within multiple investigations, totaling millions of dollars in under and over billings;

WHEREAS, although the leadership of the SWBNO claims to have largely resolved the agency’s billing crisis, inaccurate billings—in many cases remaining unresolved for years—continue to plague customers, placing millions of public dollars into question;

WHEREAS, the SWBNO remains under investigation by various agencies to determine the scale of corruption within the SWBNO’s permitting department;

WHEREAS, rainfall in New Orleans consistently surpasses the capacity of the City's aging drainage system and the aging infrastructure and equipment of the SWBNO continually experience technical failures;

WHEREAS, despite hundreds of millions of dollars from local, state, and federal sources being spent on the sewerage and water system, widespread flash flooding has become a common occurrence in many neighborhoods throughout New Orleans;

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2023, there was extreme street flooding following a rainstorm, and failure of Turbine 4;

WHEREAS, again, on February 3, 2024, there was more flooding in multiple areas of the City, including Orleans Avenue near Claiborne, Baronne Street, the I-610 exit near Franklin, Chef Menteur Highway near Downman, Airline Drive near Eagle, the Canal Blvd. underpass, the Carrollton underpass, Claiborne Avenue Uptown near State, Huey P. Long in Gretna, when several inches of rain fell on the city within a short period of time. To complicate matters Turbine 4 was offline due to a mechanical issue, and multiple backup generators were down due to a radiator leak and another due to electrical issues;

WHEREAS, following a rain event during the 2024 Mardi Gras season, the leadership of the SWBNO attributed significant flooding to the small-line drainage system of the city when, in fact, the agency was without adequate pumping capacity to appropriately respond to the rain event;

WHEREAS, these frequent floods impose financial burdens on residents and businesses, and drives up insurance costs;

WHEREAS, the New Orleans transition team of Governor-Elect Landry found that "the public has lost faith in this state-chartered agency and its ability to consistently deliver effective drainage and clean water" and that the issues of the SWBNO "are myriad and date back over 50 years;"

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health has found numerous drinking water quality violations by the SWBNO;

WHEREAS, in December of 2023, the SWBNO issued a boil advisory for a portion of Uptown after a 120-year-old iron water main failure;

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the citizens of the City of New Orleans to have the most efficient services possible; and

WHEREAS, technical experts are needed to evaluate the current operations of the SWBNO.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JEFF LANDRY, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

Section 1: The Governor's Task Force on the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans is established within the executive department, Office of the Governor.

Section 2: The duties of the Task Force shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Review the SWBNO billing processes in totality, including internal systems, billing accuracy, dispute resolution protocols, and opportunities for best practice improvements;
- B. Review the governing structure of the SWBNO, and determine whether alternative governing structures exist to increase operational efficiencies and financial stability;
- C. Review the SWBNO management and organizational structure to determine if opportunity exists for reorganization or restructuring to achieve more direct lines of authority and responsibility over key facets of business and infrastructure operations; and

Section 3: The Task Force shall report its findings within 30 days so it can inform subsequent strategies, including those for the 2024 Regular Legislative Session.

Section 4: The Task Force shall be comprised of a maximum of fourteen (14) members who, unless otherwise specified, shall be designated by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

The membership shall be composed of the following:

- A. One member appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation & Development;
- B. One member appointed by the Executive Director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority;
- C. One member appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality;
- D. One member appointed by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Louisiana;
- E. One member appointed by the Louisiana Engineering Society;
- F. One member appointed by Louisiana Associated General Contractors;

- G. One member appointed by Jefferson Parish Public Works;
 - H. One member appointed by Greater New Orleans, Inc.;
 - I. One member appointed by the Business Council of New Orleans;
 - J. One member appointed by New Orleans & Company;
- and
- K. Four (4) additional members appointed by the Governor.

Section 5: The Governor shall appoint the chair of the Task Force from the appointed members. All other officers, if any, shall be elected by the members of the Task Force.

Section 6: The Task Force shall meet at the call of the chair.

Section 7: Task Force members shall not receive additional compensation or a per diem from the Office of the Governor for serving on the Task Force.

Section 8: Support staff, facilities, and resources for the Task Force shall be provided by the Office of the Governor and other departments of the executive branch of state government.

Section 9: All departments, commissions, boards, offices, entities, agencies, and officers of the State of Louisiana, or any political subdivision thereof, are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Task Force in implementing the provisions of this Order.

Section 10: This order is effective upon signature of the Governor, and it shall remain in effect until the Task Force has completed the tasks identified in Sections 2 and 3 of this Order, or until amended, modified, terminated or rescinded by the Governor, or until terminated by operation of law.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Louisiana in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 26th day of February, 2024.


Jeff Landry
GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

ATTEST BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE


Nancy Landry
SECRETARY OF STATE