

# CENTER FOR PLANNING EXCELLENCE - Due Diligence Doc

## **Executive Summary:**

At the front lines of the climate crisis and energy production in the U.S., Louisiana is a critical site for urgent and innovative climate action. Renewable energy stands out as an immediate opportunity to build climate resiliency and catalyze an even broader range of much-needed climate work in Louisiana and the Gulf South. CPEX, Louisiana's only nonprofit planning organization, is in a unique position to bring together the legislators, decision makers, state officials, energy experts and environmental justice advocates needed to build the political support and governmental infrastructure necessary to advance an equitable transition to renewable energy in Louisiana, a place that experiences a multitude of climate and socioeconomic vulnerabilities amidst a complex and highly conservative political environment.

## **Theory of Change:**

Goal for this initiative: To advance an equitable transition to renewable energy in Louisiana.

Strategy: Bring together legislators, decision makers, state officials, energy experts and environmental justice advocates to build the political support and governmental infrastructure necessary to secure investments in the physical infrastructure, workforce, and supply chain needed to develop the renewable energy market in Louisiana in a way that addresses our climate adaptation needs as well as long standing social and economic disparities – and contributes significantly to a nationwide transition.

## **Unique Strategy/Special Sauce:**

CPEX's greatest strengths are (1) its reputation and history working successfully with elected officials in local and state government as well as with state legislators from both parties. This allows us to be influential across administrations, (2) its trusted relationships with key state officials, including Governor John Bel Edwards and others, (3) our ability to drive change by convening key stakeholders and outside experts, facilitating productive dialogue, and driving follow-through, and (4) our understanding of what is necessary to advance renewables within LA's political and administrative processes. CPEX also has the vision for Louisiana's future and the drive to step up and take the lead to catalyze collaborative action – something no other entity in the state is doing. An inclusive, comprehensive approach has always been essential to CPEX's work. Convening diverse stakeholders, building knowledge and relationships, facilitating shared learning, and consensus building are essential capacities that we bring to the effort to advance renewable energy – especially in a place like Louisiana that experiences a multitude of climate and socioeconomic vulnerabilities amidst a complex and highly conservative political Environment.

**Fundraising:**

CPEX requests \$100,000 (for a total of \$200,000) as a grant or donation to our 501(c)(3) organization to leverage ongoing efforts to develop a robust policy framework for a State Energy Office (SEO) to take full advantage of IIJA and IRA provisions for energy security and drive development of renewable energy production in Louisiana. Specifically, we propose to conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including our Governor Office staff, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary and agency staff, member(s) of the Public Service Commission, and energy and nonprofit groups; research model structures and best practices of Energy Offices in up to 5 other states, including their missions, authority, functions, and effectiveness; compile and demonstrate the breadth of IIJA and IRA formula and competitive funding opportunities which could flow through the SEO; analyze and present the findings to DNR and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate, design and facilitate a workshop with DNR and relevant stakeholders to share the findings from the Research and Analysis phase and collectively identify the vision, mission, shared goals, objectives, staffing, structure, and budget for the SEO, perform a mapping exercise with the SEO to plan for new formula funds and to prioritize for competitive funds open to the office; draft a Framework for the SEO inclusive of the workshop and mapping exercise to be shared with DNR for feedback; and refine the draft Framework and deliver product to DNR; identify next steps to ensure continued progress toward creation of a high-functioning SEO.

**Timing Constraints:**

As offshore leases become available this summer, a policy framework draft is needed to guide the energy office's policies in advance of the leasing process.

The current governor's term ends at the end of 2023. We will be working this year to build relationships with the new administration, but we are also eager to make as much progress as possible while the current governor is in office since he has already provided support for these efforts.

**Primary Influence Tactic:**

Leveraging our reputation as a trusted, neutral convener to bring together a strategically assembled group of stakeholders and experts, establishing a vision for progress, and facilitating learning and dialogue that builds consensus on a path forward.

**Other Influence Tactics:**

We plan peer-to-peer learning opportunities to connect key Louisiana legislators with like-minded peers from other states who can share their thinking and successes supporting the development of renewables in their home states. We are coordinating an advocacy effort among a coalition of Louisiana organizations with various missions and expertise relevant to the goal of advancing renewables in the state.

**Current Activity:**

CPEX provides planning and policy tools, knowledge, and services to communities throughout the state as well as to state government and partner organizations. Our services are designed

to promote healthy, equitable, sustainable and climate-resilient growth and development and adaptation at all scales.

- In partnership with the Governor's office, we are hosting workshops and followup to help state agencies understand and prepare for opportunities within the IIJA and IRA bills
- Working with state agencies to adapt their planning and operations to climate change impacts
- Assisting the state with implementation of Louisiana's Climate Initiatives Action Plan
- Started the Peer-to-peer advocacy, bringing together policy makers from different states for sharing experiences in renewables during a luncheon
- Developed a scope for additional peer-to-peer learning through site visits with elected officials.
- Working with the Department of Natural Resources to lay the groundwork for a State Energy Office to support a renewable energy industry.
- CPEX hosts an annual Smart Growth Summit – a multi-disciplinary conference that connects national and international experts and innovators with local practitioners, elected officials and advocates to build understanding of challenges and opportunities for those in planning and related fields around climate, health, resilience and equity.
- CPEX is also currently working with several communities throughout the state to develop plans and policies focused on climate resilience, Complete Streets, and healthy community design.

#### **Future Goals:**

Our vision is to create a livable, thriving, and prosperous state through clean renewable energy - offshore wind and solar in particular. Renewable energy stands out as one of the most affordable technologies in the energy market, and presents an immediate opportunity for revenue generation, job creation, economic growth and national leadership on climate resilience. As such, we are planning on continuing our peer-to-peer learning efforts, connecting policy makers from different states through relevant site visits (solar and wind energy sites), and a speaker series with experts.

#### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Statement:**

CPEX is committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and we aspire to do so intentionally, in every aspect of our work. We recognize that sustainable prosperity and community resilience cannot be realized in the absence of equity and inclusion for all Louisiana residents, and we strive to lift up all voices in our efforts to ensure that all Louisianans are included in the decisions that impact their communities, region and state. CPEX is committed to integrating DEI into the fabric of our organization and our work, from our internal culture to how we partner with communities and other organizations to how we use our resources. We are continually seeking ways to expand our impact and improve our performance on these measures.

#### **Leadership Team Roles + Board Members:**

The CPEX leadership team includes Camille Manning Broome, President and CEO; Jessica McKelvie Kemp, Vice President; Jeannette Dubinin, Director of Resilience; Kim Marousek,

Director of Planning; and Lauren Marschall, Director of Operations.

The CPEX Board of Directors comprises a formidable set of passionate community leaders with extensive backgrounds in planning, law, legislation, economic development, entrepreneurship, marketing and communications, healthcare and philanthropy. Board members are listed below, with their racial and gender identity listed if they chose to provide it. CPEX does not require board members to share their racial, gender, and LGBTQ status. Bios for each member are at <https://www.cplex.org/board>.

James Brandt - White, Male

Preston Castille, Jr. - Black or African American, Male – Board President

Steve Cochran - White, Male

Helena Cunningham - Black or African American, Female

Ronnie Daigle - White, Male

Kelsey Funes - White, Female

Cordell Haymon - White, Male

Camille Manning-Broome - White, Female

Mary Landrieu – White, Female

Somesh Nigam – Asian American, Male

Paul Rainwater – White, Male

Randy Roussel - White, Male

Robert Schneckenburger - White, Male

Ashley Shelton – Black or African American, Female

Deborah Sternberg - White, Female

Robert Twilley - - White, Male

Erin Monroe Wesley - Black or African American, Female

### **Organizations Structure & Overhead:**

CPEX is a 501(c)(3) organization, Louisiana's only nonprofit planning organization. CPEX's 2023 operating budget is \$2,466,420.00, and its 2022 operating budget was \$2,213,100.00.

### **Impact Reporting:**

Findings of our research and analysis; membership of the committee and meeting notes from first meeting; workshop speakers and draft agendas. We can provide progress reports regarding the establishment and activities of the State Energy Office, funding secured, policy wins (and losses) as well as progress on advancing renewable energy production and consumption in Louisiana overall.

### **Barriers/Risks:**

We have built our strategy for this initiative to take into account the conservative political environment in which we are operating; the strength of the oil and gas lobby in Louisiana; and cultural perceptions that tend to see the oil and gas industry as a leading job creator (they're not) and as the only viable and significant economic opportunity for our state.

Hurricane season (Jun - Nov) often presents disruptions to work plans in this region, but CPEX and our partners are very experienced in managing these disruptions and minimizing their impacts.

**Landscape/Collaborators/Competitors:**

Louisiana hasn't had much activity in the renewables space until very recently – the energy conversation has long been dominated by oil and gas. The members of the 2030 Allies bring capacity as subject matter experts, grassroots and grassroots advocates, in addition to CPEX's planning and policy expertise, convening and facilitation experience, and our strong relationships with local and state elected officials, state agencies, and capacity to build national relationships.

**2030 Allies:**

- Alliance for Affordable Energy
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
- Power Coalition
- Rise St. James
- BISCO