Comment Response Matrix
Gulf Landing LLC
Deepwater Port Permit Application
Submitted by U.S. Department of Interior

#	Location			Comment	Reviewer initials	U.S. Coast Guard response
	Page	Line	Section			
1			General	The draft EIS is generally well-written and well-organized. That document adequately describes fish and wildlife resources in the project area, as well as the purpose and need for the proposed action and potential impacts associated with each alternative. Our specific comments on the draft EIS are provided in the next section of this letter.	BF	
2			General	As you know, West Indian manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) are federally listed as endangered, and they occasionally enter Louisiana coastal waters and streams during the summer months, June through September. The manatee has declined in numbers due to collisions with boats and barges, entrapment in flood control structures, poaching, habitat loss, and pollution. Cold weather and outbreaks of red tide may also adversely affect these animals.	BF	
3			General	Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nest in Louisiana from October through mid-May. Eagles typically nest in bald cypress trees near fresh to intermediate marshes or open water in the southeastern Parishes. Eagles also winter, and infrequently nest near large lakes in central and northern Louisiana. Bald eagles usually return to the same nest year after year, but they may also use alternate nests in the same general vicinity in different years. Bald eagles are most vulnerable to disturbance during courtship, nest building, egg laying, incubation, and brooding (roughly the first 12 weeks of the nesting cycle). Disturbance during this critical period may lead to nest abandonment, cracked and chilled eggs, and exposure of small young to the elements. Human activity near a nest late in the nesting cycle may also cause flightless birds to jump from the nest tree, thus reducing their chance of survival. Major threats to this species include habitat alteration, human disturbance, and environmental contaminants, particularly organochlorine pesticides and lead.	BF	

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4			General	The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), as well as its designated critical habitat, occur along the Gulf of Mexico shoreline. Piping plovers winter in Louisiana, and may be present for 8 to 10 months; they arrive from the breeding grounds as early as late July and remain until late March or April. Piping plovers feed extensively on intertidal beaches, mudflats, sandflats, algal flats, and wash-over passes with no or very sparse emergent vegetation; they also require unvegetated or sparsely vegetated areas for roosting. Roosting areas may have debris, detritus, or microtopographic relief offering refuge to plovers from high winds and cold weather. In most areas, wintering piping plovers are dependant on a mosaic of sites distributed throughout the landscape, as the suitability of a particular site for foraging or roosting is dependent on local weather and tidal conditions. Plovers also move among sites as environmental conditions change. Designated piping plover critical habitat includes those specific areas that are essential to the conservation of that species. The primary constituent elements for piping plover wintering habitat are those which support foraging, roosting, and sheltering and the physical features necessary for maintaining the natural processes that support those habitat components. Constituent elements are found in geologically dynamic coastal areas that contain intertidal beaches and flats (between annual low tide and annual high tide), and associated dune systems and flats above annual high tide. Important components (or primary constituent elements) of intertidal flats include sand and/or mud flats with no or very sparse emergent vegetation. Adjacent unvegetated or sparsely vegetated sand, mud, or algal flats above high tide are also important, especially for roosting plovers. Major threats to this species include the loss and degradation of habitat due to development, disturbance by humans and pets, and predation.	BF	
5			General	In southwestern Louisiana, brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) are currently known to nest on Rabbit Island in Calcasieu Lake. In winter, spring, and summer, nests are built in mangrove trees or other shrubby vegetation, although occasional ground nesting may occur. Pelicans also change nesting sites as habitat changes occur. Brown pelicans feed along the Louisiana coast in shallow estuarine waters, using sand spits and offshore sand bars as rest and roost areas. Major threats to this species include chemical pollutants, colony site erosion, disease, and human disturbance.	BF	

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6			General	According to the draft EIS, installation of the proposed terminal and pipelines would occur approximately 14 to 38 miles offshore and would have no direct or indirect effects on threatened or endangered species that occur within the region of influence. The West Indian manatee rarely occurs in the northern Gulf of Mexico; therefore, support vessels associated with the proposed terminal are not expected to interact with manatees. The proposed action would not encompass areas inhabited by the bald eagle or the piping plover, and the action would not impact designated piping plover critical habitat. Although there may be some temporary, limited disturbance (i.e., temporary displacement to nearby suitable habitat) to the brown pelican during pipeline installation activities, there is an abundance of suitable habitat in surrounding areas. Based on that information, the Service concurs with the USCG/MARAD's determination that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the manatee, the bald eagle, the piping plover or its critical habitat, and the brown pelican.	BF	
7			General	No further ESA consultation for the above-mentioned species will be necessary for the proposed action unless the action has not been initiated within one year, or the scope or location of the action is changed. If the project has not been initiated within one year, or if the scope or location of the action is changed, further consultation with the Service's Lafayette, Louisiana, Field Office will be necessary. Should, however, the proposed project involve construction of a new fabrication yard or expansion of an existing fabrication yard for the terminal's gravity-based structures, and should that facility be located along the Louisiana Gulf coast, further consultation with the Service's Lafayette, Louisiana, Field Office will be necessary for the manatee, bald eagle, piping plover, and brown pelican.	BF	

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8	3-4	38-39	3.1.3.1	The second to last sentence describes a range of "mean annual" sea floor temperatures from 12.3 to 30.2 degrees Centigrade. It seems unlikely that the mean annual temperature would vary this much from one period of years to another period of years. It seems more likely that what has been reported is the mean monthly temperature for the coldest and warmest months for a period of years, based on examination of the data at the NOAA website for this buoy, http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page?station=42035. We recommend that the data be verified and the sentence rewritten. Similarly, the last sentence describes the "mean annual range" of 8.6 to 36.0 degrees Centigrade. The NOAA data reports 8.6 degrees to be the mean monthly temperature for the coldest January and December in the period of record; and 36.0 degrees for the warmest July on record; we recommend that the sentence be rewritten to more accurately describe what the data represent. For clarity the terms "mean annual" is the mean of all annual values for a long-term period; for example mean annual surface temperature for the period 1980-90; whereas "annual mean" is the mean value for each individual year; for example the annual mean surface temperature for 1990 is 12°C. The same applies for "mean monthly" and "monthly mean", and "mean daily" and "daily mean".	BJ	
9	3-4	38	3.1.3.1	The source of the information about the sea floor temperature should be provided. The paragraph as written implies that the data come from the NOAA buoy; the NOAA website indicates that Buoy 42035 measures sea temperature 0.6 m below the surface.	BJ	
10	3-25	43	3.2.5.2	This sentence states that there are 120 bald eagle nests in Louisiana. According to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) data from the 2003-2004 bald eagle nesting season, however, there are currently 318 bald eagle nests in Louisiana. We recommend that sentence be revised accordingly.	BF	
11	4-10	39	4.1.2.4	The salinity of the discharge water is described to be "0.04 parts per trillion"—far purer than most water distilled for laboratory research. We recommend that the data unit measurement values be verified.	BJ	

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12			Appendix C	This appendix includes correspondence to the USCG/MARAD from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding threatened and endangered species; however, the June 2, 2004, letter regarding threatened and endangered species is not included. The Service's *Guidance on the Siting, Construction, Operation and Decommissioning of Communications Towers* was included with that letter as an enclosure. That letter and the enclosure is part of the informal consultation process, and should be included in Appendix C.	BF	

- *BF –Brigette Firmin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (337) 291-3108, 17 August, 2004*
- *BJ – Brenda Johnson, U.S. Geological Survey, (703) 648-6832, 19 August, 2004*