



Officers

Merritt Lane
Chair

Steven W. Usdin
Vice Chair

Anne P. Baños
Secretary

Louis M. Freeman, Jr.
Treasurer

Blake J. Stanfill
Assistant Secretary

Christine Albert
Assistant Treasurer

Past Chair

Norma Grace

President & CEO

Rebecca Mowbray
Samuel Zemurray Chair in
Research Leadership

Board Members

Ryan Adkerson
Elizabeth Boh
Susan G. Brennan
Melanie Bronfin
Vanessa Claiborne
Carlin Conner
Mollye Demosthenidy
Ben A. Dupuy
Perry Eastman IV
Jessie S. Haynes
John Landrum
Ileana Ledet
Gary L. Lorio
Ronald P. McClain
Graham Ralston
Patty Riddlebarger
David Rieveschl
Jennifer Roberts
Douglas M. Stokes
Vera Triplett
Lamar Villere
Charles West
Jonathan A. Wilson

Honorary Board

Harry J. Blumenthal, Jr.
Edgar L. Chase III
J. Kelly Duncan
Ludovico Feoli
Hardy B. Fowler
Louis M. Freeman
Richard W. Freeman, Jr.
Ronald J. French
David Guidry
Hans B. Jonassen
Diana M. Lewis
Mark A. Mayer
Anne M. Milling
R. King Milling
Lynes R. Sloss
Sterling Scott Willis

BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH
1055 St. Charles Ave., Suite 200
New Orleans, LA 70130
504-525-4152 / www.bgr.org

BGR MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release – July 25, 2023

Contact: Stephen Stuart, *Vice President and Research Director*
sstuart@bgr.org
(504) 525-4152, ext. 105

BGR Offers Spanish and Vietnamese Translations of S&WB Report Summaries

New Orleans residents concerned about the future of the Sewerage and Water Board, but whose primary language is Spanish or Vietnamese, can now access translated summaries of the Bureau of Governmental Research's new report on this topic.

BGR's goal is to reach a broader audience of residents concerned about significant problems with the governance of the S&WB that affect the performance of New Orleans' water, sewer and drainage systems. BGR analyzed these issues in its May 2023 report, [*Waterworks in Progress: Reassessing the Sewerage & Water Board's Governance Problems and Potential Paths to Long-Term Improvement.*](#)

The translated summaries highlight BGR's key findings and recommendations from its research report. The InBrief in [Spanish](#) and [Vietnamese](#) is a condensed version of the full report, giving readers the gist of the S&WB's governance problems and the two potential paths BGR identifies for long term-improvement, either strengthening S&WB as a stand-alone utility or replacing the S&WB with a municipal utility created by the City of New Orleans. The executive summary in [Spanish](#) and [Vietnamese](#) provides more explanation and context for BGR's research findings and recommendations.

The use of translations will allow more members of the New Orleans community to be informed on policy issues that affect their daily lives.

“All residents of New Orleans depend on the performance of the Sewerage & Water Board, and they should be able to engage with local government using BGR's research to build the city they desire. We want to make sure our work is accessible to everyone,” said Rebecca Mowbray, BGR's president and CEO.

Highlights of BGR's *Waterworks in Progress* report include:





- The S&WB's governance structure – basically, the laws and policies that guide decision making for the utility – weakens its finances, its

coordination with the City of New Orleans and public accountability for both entities.

- To improve the utility’s governance, BGR suggests either strengthening the S&WB as a stand-alone utility that operates separately from City government or replacing it with a municipal utility that functions as part of City government. Both options have complications that require further study, which the mayor should initiate. But inaction poses unacceptable risks to vital infrastructure systems.
- BGR also recommends several near-term solutions to improve financial sustainability, drainage system performance and S&WB-City coordination, regardless of which reform option is ultimately chosen.

BGR’s report finds that the S&WB’s current governance structure doesn’t work effectively because it combines key features of a stand-alone utility with those of a municipal utility. “The result is a complicated web of competing interests and weak accountability that works against long-term performance,” Mowbray said. “The structure is inefficient, ineffective and ultimately to blame for many of the infrastructure problems New Orleanians experience.”

Visit BGR’s website to [read the translated report summaries and access the full report](#). The translations are also available through these direct links:

	<i>InBrief</i>	<i>Executive Summary</i>
Español	 RESUMEN	 RESUMEN EJECUTIVO
Tiếng Việt	 TIN NGẮN	 TÓM TẮT BÁO CÁO

###

BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information, call (504) 525-4152 or visit BGR’s website, www.bgr.org.