



# Louisiana Environmental Justice Voices

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Louisiana Environmental Justice Project

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## The Struggle for Clean Air to Breathe continues in Chalmette

The latest event in the fight to reduce pollution in Chalmette and the metro New Orleans area took place on the 4th of August. The event was a Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LA DEQ) hearing on a 'clean air permit' for the Chalmette Refining L.L.C (ExxonMobil) utilities area of the large refinery.

The Louisiana Bucket Brigade, St. Bernard Citizens for Environmental Quality and the Sierra Club all had members there to ask questions of the permit and make comments.

Community leaders are concerned that the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LA DEQ) is not actively working to ensure that the Metro New Orleans Region will not **exceed** the Federal guidelines for ozone.

As noted in the article "Ozone readings creep close to federal trigger point, threat-

ening people -- and businesses -- in the area" on July 15, 2005 in the Times Picayune, there is a statement from a DEQ official "*Several times this year, the DEQ has issued warnings of high ozone to people at risk in the New Orleans area, recommending that they stay inside and avoid heavy exercise.*"

Concerned persons in Metro New Orleans area believe that this proposed permit is a *stasis quoi* permit which is not working to make sure that the Metro New Orleans area does not go into ozone non-attainment.

Concerns were also raised about new scientific research which shows that increased ozone exposure will lead to increased deaths in the exposed population. The article "**Killer Smog a National Problem**" discusses a study printed in the Journal of the American Medical Association. "**Ozone and Short-term Mortality in 95 US Urban Communities, 1987-2000**" Which reports increased deaths after increases in the ozone level.

Web story found at:<http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/stbernard/index.ssf?base/news-2/1123310684162390.xml>

## St. James Parish residents outraged at DHH statements

Members of the Citizens and Youth of St. James La. Hwy 18 & La. Hwy 44, met on August 11th to talk about the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LA DHH) recently completed study "Environmental Public Health Review Convent, La. 19 July 2005." The document can be downloaded at:

<http://www.oph.dhh.state.la.us/environmentalepidemiology/diseaseclust/index.html> .

Residents of the area who have been involved with and asking for and the health study for almost 2 years were very concerned about the statements by a spokesman for DHH in the Baton Rouge Advocate "DHH officials said the skin problems are 'most likely related to individual circumstances.' Bob Johannessen, spokesman for DHH, said 'individual circumstances' **means lifestyle.**" [http://2theadvocate.com/stories/080505/sub\\_health001.shtml](http://2theadvocate.com/stories/080505/sub_health001.shtml)

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## Health

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Ms. Willie Mae Williams, president of the group said, “our health concerns are on going and there will be no future for ourselves or our children if we do not do something about these health problems.” She added, “it’s like a war going on around where we are living the air is bad many days and nights.”

The residents talked about the problems of getting doctors to talk with them once they tell the doctors that they live in St. James Parish. “It seems as if the doctors do not understand what is happening down here, and do not believe us when we tell them about all the bad odors and how our skin breaks out in rashes” said Ms. Williams.

The DHH health review is open for public comments until the 19th of Sept. E-mail Darryl for more details.

### SEND YOUR ARTICLES

La. EJ Voices Newsletter and reminds you to continue to send your heartfelt articles and writing to Darryl Malek-Wiley. Submit your articles to [darryl.malek-wiley@sierraclub.org](mailto:darryl.malek-wiley@sierraclub.org) by Wednesday **September 21st** to be published in our next issue.

## Upcoming Events

### Join the Sierra Club for Lunch!

As always you are welcome to join the Sierra Club– Baton Rouge for our brown bag lunches, on the second Tuesday of each month. The next lunch will be on **September 13th**. Please RSVP to [broffice@louisiana.sierraclub.org](mailto:broffice@louisiana.sierraclub.org) or 225-925-8650.

### LEAN Environmental 2005 Conference

The 19th LEAN Annual Conference will be held on the 8th of October in Baton Rouge. This year the conference will be held at the Sheraton Convention Center Hotel and Argosy Atrium.

### WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

As a non-partisan organization, the **Coalition for Louisiana Progress**, CLOUP, seeks to assist forward-thinking Louisiana residents in influencing public policy. Through our website and e-newsletter, you can now stay on top of the latest environmental health news and easily take action to influence decision-makers. Joining the group is free and only requires interest and a small amount of time. Together, we can make Louisiana the state of choice for our families and our futures.

[www.cloup.org](http://www.cloup.org)