



Environment Threatened in Louisiana

July 2004

Since coming into office, the Bush Administration has undermined existing environmental policies, resulting in:

✘ **Dirtier air.** The Bush Administration instituted new rules that allow coal-fired plants to expand without putting modern pollution control equipment in place, which would significantly reduce mercury and other emissions. Mercury also enters the water, contaminating commonly-eaten fish.

✘ **Unsafe water.** The Bush Administration immediately rolled back the new standard for arsenic in drinking water, permitting higher levels. Arsenic, while naturally-occurring, is also a toxic release from mining and manufacturing, and is believed to cause several different types of cancer as well as a host of other diseases.

✘ **Burden on taxpayers.** President Bush refused to reinstate the tax on polluters which has long funded the clean-up of Superfund sites. The rate of clean-ups by the EPA has slowed considerably during the current Administration's tenure. The fund has essentially run out of money, leaving the cost of clean-ups to fall to taxpayers.

✘ **Underfunded national parks.** An estimated \$600 million is needed for maintenance and repair of our national parks, yet the Administration has failed to allocate enough money.² Parks across the country have closed visitor centers, cut public education programs and reduced money spent on resource management, park infrastructure and historic buildings to cope with the shortfall.

The Environment in Louisiana¹

- 42% breathe air classified as 'unhealthy' or worse
- 340,561 people drink water with a health violation
- 22% of surface waters impaired or threatened
- 35 fish consumption advisories issued
- 13 Superfund sites exist (designated by the federal government as the most polluted sites in the country)

Health Risks in Louisiana

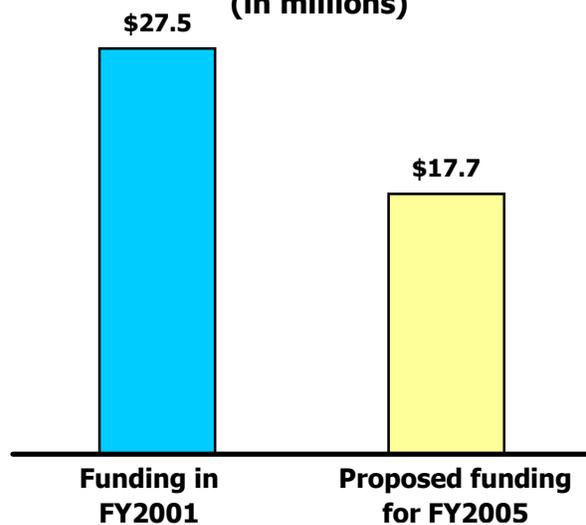
- 99% live in an area with 100 times the cancer risk goal set by the Clean Air Act
- 87% live in an area with a worse risk of non-cancer health problems than the goal set by the Clean Air Act
- 93,651 children have asthma

Notes: ¹Air quality refers to EPA's Air Quality Index; air quality, surface water and health risks (not available for Alaska and Hawaii) are from or based on Scorecard at www.scorecard.org. Fish consumption advisories, drinking water with a health violation (2001 rules) and Superfund sites are from EPA at www.epa.gov. Asthma in children by state is estimated from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and the National Health Interview Survey. ²National Parks Conservation Association at www.npca.org.

✘ **Taxpayers pick up cost of logging.** The Administration plans to reverse the Clinton Administration ‘roadless rule’ which protects land in national forests from new road construction. Taxpayers foot the bill for road construction in national forests so that private logging companies can operate. Insufficient funding for maintenance and improvements on existing roads, trails and bridges has already left a \$13 billion backlog.³

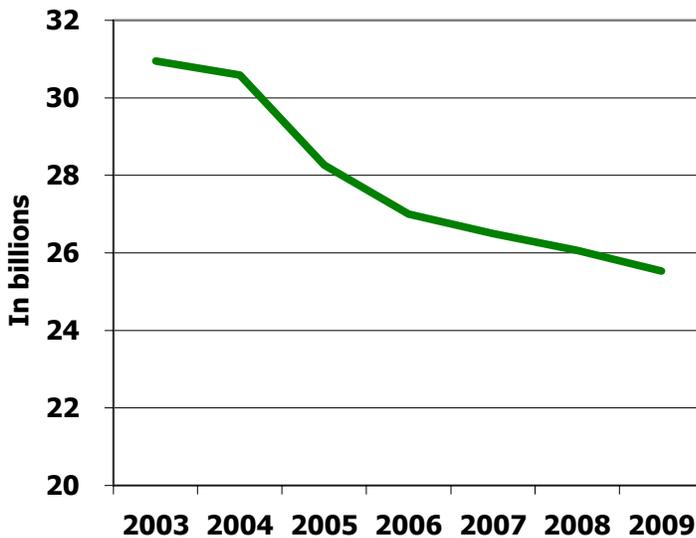
✘ **Cuts to state programs.** The Bush Administration has included in its proposed budgets significant cuts to two vital EPA programs that provide federal money to the states: The Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. In Louisiana, federal funding for these programs would be cut under the proposed budget for FY2005 by 36% (\$9.9 million), compared to funding when President Bush first entered office.⁴

Funding for Clean Water in Louisiana (in millions)



The Future of Federal Funding⁵

Natural Resources and Environment



Each year of the Bush presidency, the Administration proposed cutting the Environmental Protection Agency’s budget an average of 8% over the previous year. The EPA maintains a number of programs important to a clean, healthy environment and, like other agencies, had additional burdens added to its workload due to homeland security measures.

The future of all environmental and natural resource programs are threatened if current policies are maintained. Under instructions

from the White House, total spending for these programs would be cut significantly for fiscal years 2006 through 2009.

Notes: ³See OMB Performance Assessment Rating Tool, 2004 at www.whitehouse.gov/omb. ⁴Based on the *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2003* and numbers obtained from the EPA. ⁵An OMB memo (May 19, 2004) instructed agencies to prepare budgets consistent with an earlier circular containing the policy and baseline numbers. The original documents are available from OMB Watch at www.ombwatch.org. Graph documents discretionary spending.