

Louisiana Environmental Action Network

Helping to make Louisiana safe for future generations



October 8, 2014

Regarding Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council Agenda item:

- N. Expressing the Metropolitan Council's opposition to lowering Federal Air Quality Standards further; and also expressing the Council's support of the LDEQ consideration of a rule review that would allow for generators of emission reduction credits for mobile source, area source and point source projects for use in offsetting emissions from new projects or expansions at existing facilities; and further expressing support for other EPA and LDEQ initiatives to improve air quality in the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge.
By: Councilman Amoroso.]

Dear Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council Members,

I am submitting this letter to urge the council to stand in support of protecting the health of East Baton Rouge Parish citizens AND support the local economy. The Metro-Council's opposition to the EPA's pending revision to ozone standards stands to undermine both. For decades, heavy polluting industry lobbyists have made claims of economic disaster prior to implementation of environmental regulation. However the facts are clear. Environmental protection builds the economy not only by protecting public health but also as an economic driver for jobs and industry growth.

Lower ozone limits would protect the health of local citizens, improve quality of life and represent significant economic savings from improved public health (less sick days, less emergency room visits, less major cardiopulmonary incidents due to air pollution).

Industries in East Baton Rouge Parish and throughout the state produce emissions that contribute to the creation of ozone. Exposure to ozone and the pollutants that produce it have been shown to create serious health impacts including premature death, asthma, bronchitis, heart attack, and other cardiopulmonary problems. The reduction of ozone represents an important effort to protect the health of Louisiana citizens and their quality of life. The currently proposed revision would lower the standard from 75ppb to between 60 and 70ppb. The American Lung Association has urged the EPA to set the limit at 60. EPA has estimated that setting a lower standard of 60 parts per billion would prevent 4,000 to 12,000 premature deaths a year by 2020. In addition to this life saving potential, protecting our air quality makes good economic sense. Analysis of the 1990 amendments of the Clean Air Act finds that benefits exceed cost 26 to 1. That is a 2500% return on investment.

Additionally, Environmental protection has been shown to be an effective job creator and the industry of environment protection itself is a rapidly growing sector that Louisiana should be leading.

Environmental spending has been shown to produce more jobs than comparable spending in other areas. Industries investing in safety, pollution control and remediation create jobs by utilizing up to date technology and creating a demand for implementing, operating and maintaining efficient, safe and environmentally responsible systems. Local industries will tell you that they have done all they can. However, according to Toxic Release Inventory data, companies in Louisiana pollute more than their counterparts in other states like Texas and New Jersey. In 2013, industries in Baton Rouge released over 4 million pounds of toxic emissions into the air we breath. Baton Rouge must continue to work to lower these harmful emissions. The newly proposed strategy for local industry to off-set their emissions by investing in off-site efforts is not sufficient. This would essentially allow heavy polluting industries to pay their way out of the environmental damages they inflict. This strategy does not address the direct local impacts of these emissions while also allowing the industry to avoid investing in new and innovative solutions to move their own processes and industry forward. As Louisiana is in the midst of another industrial boom, we have the opportunity to step-up and become a world leader in the rapidly growing environmental technology sector. Louisiana's unique and fragile environment defines our culture and quality of life. We, perhaps more than any state, stand to lose the most by not prioritizing the protection of our environment. That protection is a safeguard not only for the environment of Louisiana, but also the health and safety of our citizens as well as the health of our economy. Implementing these stricter standards for ozone would create an opportunity for our local industries to grow, build jobs and protect the health of the people who live and work in Louisiana.

I understand that in the current political climate, some of the metro-council members may feel it is beneficial for them to actively oppose EPA regulations. However, as a resident and public servant I know that you are committed to what is best for our city. Please take the time to review the information and studies included with this letter. The facts are clear. Reducing ozone protects public health which represents enormous savings and environmental protections improve the economy. I am urging you to be a champion for the health and quality of life of the citizens of Baton Rouge as well as the economy by supporting the revised limits for ozone.

Thank You for your time and service to our citizens,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Marylee Orr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marylee" and the last name "Orr" clearly distinguishable.

Marylee Orr
Executive Director

For more information please review the attached information as well as these relevant studies and links:

Pizer, William & Morgenstern, Richard & Shih, Jhih-Shyang, 2002. "**Jobs Versus the Environment: An Industry-level Perspective**," Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, Volume 43, Issue 3, pg. 412-436
<https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/jeeman/v43y2002i3p412-436.html>

Bezdek, Roger & Wendling, Robert & Diperna, Paula, 2008. "**Environmental Protection, the economy, and jobs: National and regional analyses**," Journal of Environmental Management
<http://www.misi-net.com/publications/JEM-V86-08.pdf>

Jorgenson, Dale and Associates, 2002. "**An Economic Analysis of the Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act 1970-1990**," Revised Report of Results and Finding. Prepared for USEPA, National Center for Environmental Economics
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/ee/epa/erm.nsf/AuthorJ/5565FCFD16301A7485257830007FB612>

White Paper prepared in response to a request from Congressmen Waxman and Rush, 2011, "**Empirical evidence regarding the effects of the Clean Air Act on jobs and economic growth**."
http://www.epa.gov/ocir/pdf/hottopics/2011_0208_white_paper.pdf

EPA's analysis of the health and economic benefits of **Cross State Air Pollution Rule(CSAPR)**
<http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/CSAPR/index.html>

Informative Article from the Natural Resources Defense Council: **Gains from Clean Air Act: Bull Market Without the Bust by Laurie Johnson**
http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/ljohnson/gains_from_clean_air_act_a_bul.html



Dubinsky Photography

The Relationship between the environment and the economy is positive, that is, improving the environment also improves the economy. States with good environments have better economies than those with polluted environments. For example, between 1988 and 1992 the pollution levels in Louisiana were cut in half because industry spent money to reduce its pollution and, at the same time, 25,000 jobs were created in the manufacturing sector alone. The industry spending was for equipment, so local business did better, and workers were hired to operate the equipment.

People and business want to locate in clean environments and not in polluted areas. Once here people start new businesses and expand existing ones. By investing in protecting the environment we are investing in the economy and ultimately in the people of Louisiana.

-Paul Templet

Former Secretary of LDEQ

Quality of life is the Key to a Healthy Economy

A Second Paycheck

Good roads and schools, low crime levels, clean environments, a rich local culture - these ingredients make up quality of life. When people live in communities where quality of life is high, they receive a kind of second paycheck, paid not just in dollars but in convenience and civic pride. Hunting, fishing, farming, hiking, bird watching, boating, and camping are all parts of Louisiana's culture that build quality of life and depend on good environmental quality.

If we build Quality of Life, business will come and stay.

Smart communities know that businesses invest where second paychecks are high. Investors need skilled labor, an environment that enhances their prestige, and dependable government partners. Louisiana has perhaps the richest and most unique culture in the south and yet we often struggle to keep young talent here in state as they pursue the best place to build their careers and livelihoods. Building quality of life builds economic growth and helps Louisiana keep its ambitious young professionals here at home.

Louisiana has an unfortunate history of environmental pollution. Public services are seen as second rate and many feel there is an industry culture resistant to change.

Our economy is focused on attracting smokestack industry, and we do that fairly well. But we could get a larger piece of the economic pie if we changed our priorities and put QUALITY of life at the top. Making Louisiana a clean and safe place to live makes good economic sense for everyone.

Who Says Business as Usual Makes Good Business Sense?

DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT LOUISIANA'S ECONOMY

Myth 1

Myth: Overzealous environmentalists cost our state jobs.

In fact, many studies have shown that states with tight environmental controls create more jobs than states with lenient regulatory systems. Industries investing in safety, pollution control and remediation create jobs by utilizing up to date technology and creating a demand for implementing, operating and maintaining efficient, safe and environmentally responsible systems.

Myth 2

Myth: LA industries have eliminated all the pollution they can.

Although Louisiana industries have reduced their emissions in the last 20 years, they still pollute far more than their counterparts in other industrialized states. According to 2009 Toxic Release Inventory data, New Jersey's manufacturing sector produced 49 pounds of pollution per employee, Texas's produced 226 pounds per employee, and Louisiana's produced 778 pounds per employee. The same corporations/industries create emissions in all three states, but the level of environmental enforcement differs. Louisiana doesn't require corporations to run clean operations here, so they don't.

Myth 3

Myth: Oil, gas, and chemical industries provide most of the jobs in Louisiana.

The oil, gas, and chemical industries employed about 85,000 people or 5% of the workers in Louisiana. These industries haven't been a steady source of new jobs in decades.

Myth 4

Myth: Our industrial subsidy program works. Firms that receive tax breaks pay back to the people of Louisiana.

In 2009 alone, approximately \$745 million that could have been invested in local schools, roads, and other services was funneled into industrial tax exemptions. Meanwhile, the states budget short falls have led to massive cuts to higher education, a key component to maintaining a well paid, skilled workforce here in Louisiana. Louisiana is the only state that does not give local government a say in granting these exemptions. A state board of commerce and industry makes these decisions.

Myth 5

Myth: Without generous subsidies, industry already in Louisiana will move out of state.

Louisiana's industries have a good deal here and they know it. Besides enormous tax breaks and low pollution control standards, they have access to the Mississippi River, globally important ports, an extensive pipeline network, and the oil and gas production just off our coast. Of course, corporations can and do move overseas, but if Louisiana wants to win bidding wars with third world countries, we must act like a third world country ourselves. This means gutting our labor regulations, degrading our unique and fragile environment and sacrificing public health.

Myth 6

Myth: Natural Gas is the fuel for Louisiana's economic future.

Natural gas production in Louisiana has increased on average 11% per year from 2006 - 2010. However, Louisiana currently faces unexpected budget shortfalls and a multi-year severance tax exemption on new shale gas wells has excluded the state's depressed budget from much benefit.

“The tired old ‘jobs versus environment’ argument, which Louisiana officials touted in the 1970s, is as outdated as long hair and free love.” - New Orleans Gambit Weekly

Entrepreneurs and Environmentalists:

It's time to heal the split

Misinformation has divided Louisiana's business people and environmentalists.

Louisiana is at a turning point. Louisiana is working to diversify its business market and has made great strides in areas such as software development, healthcare, entertainment and film.

Entrepreneurs are trying their luck here and its time to make sure they all have a fair shot at success. Why? Because business in the 21st century isn't about luring smoke stack industries, it's about creating a high quality of life for everyone. Businesses that provide opportunities here in Louisiana, while operating responsibly and not degrading our environment, build quality of life and help make Louisiana a great place to live. This, in turn, attracts businesses that provide good jobs and diverse opportunities for local economies

Let's not buy the old rhetoric that pits entrepreneurs against environmentalists.

It's time to go for the green: economic health AND clean air, water, and land.

- We all want a thriving economy
- We all want good jobs
- We all want the best for our state.

How do we get there?

- Assure a good level of environmental quality. Louisiana's poor environment record scares off the new investment our economy needs. By enforcing existing regulations and providing the right kind of economic incentives, we will reward law abiding firms and affirm our commitment to healthy communities.
- Revamp our tax incentives program. Each year our industrial tax exemption program takes more than \$100 million from state programs such as schools. It gives millions in subsidies to petrochemical conglomerates that provide few local jobs. By changing our tax incentives, we can adequately support our state infrastructure, and attract people and business that truly benefit our community.
- Customize pollution prevention plans for individual businesses. Firms worldwide are saving millions by reworking production processes to avoid pollution before it starts. Given time, technological assistance, and economic incentives, Louisiana businesses can also make higher profits while lowering waste and pollution.

Links of interest:

<http://theadvocate.com/news/opinion/1574830-123/our-views-wells-a-bust.html>

<http://www.labudget.org/lbp/2011/03/subsidizing-big-business-in-louisiana/>

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/slashingsubsidies.pdf>

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2011/12/louisiana_flunks_at_enforcing.html

<http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.la.htm>

http://dnr.louisiana.gov/assets/TAD/data/facts_and_figures/table37.htm

<http://www.rtknet.org/db/tri/tri.php?>

database=tri&reptype=f&reporting_year=2009&corechem=n&rsei=y&detail=-1&dbtype=C&sortp=D&datatype=T&state=LA

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