To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Sun 9/17/2017 6:01:08 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: Week in Review & What's Ahead

To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Blabber Buzz Alerts
Sent: Thur 8/31/2017 1:53:52 PM
Subject: Breaking News - Two Explosions Reported At Arkema Chemical Plant In Texas

BREAKING NEWS

Two Explosions Reported At Arkema Chemical Plant In Texas

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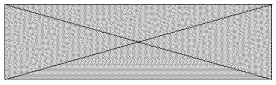

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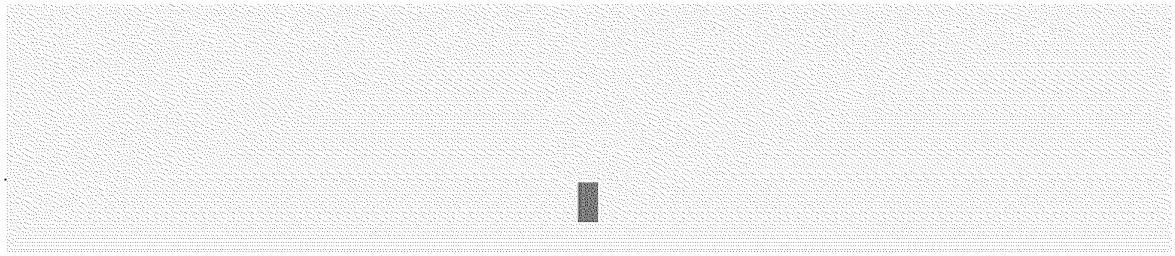
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Thur 8/31/2017 12:27:22 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: Gas Prices Hit 2-Year High Amid Calls for Trump to Tap SPR

To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Tue 9/12/2017 12:06:19 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: New U.N. Sanctions Against North Korea Cap Oil Imports



To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Jim Geraghty
Sent: Fri 9/1/2017 2:14:30 PM
Subject: Morning Jolt: Chemical Blasts Release Hazardous Waste into Houston Waters

September 01 2017

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Chemical Blasts Release Hazardous Waste into Houston Waters

Philip H. DeVoe

Making the clickthrough worthwhile: Chemical explosions add more danger to Houston, a banana peel sparks a conversation on race at Ole Miss, and a *Slate* op-ed praises the socialist behavior Harvey has brought to Houston.

The Latest Catastrophe in Houston

Explosions at a Houston-area chemical plant have complicated rescue efforts and escalated the danger in a region already grappling with Hurricane Harvey:

> When the hurricane blew in, workers at the Arkema chemical plant in Crosby, Tex., faced the problem of keeping the plant's volatile chemicals cold. The plant had 19.5 tons of organic peroxides of various strengths, all of them requiring refrigeration to prevent ignition.
>
> But the power went out, and then the floodwaters came and knocked out the plant's generators. A ...

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Panhandling for Notre Dame Cathedral

Michael Brendan Dougherty

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Armond White

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Houston Rescuers Prove the Lie of 'Toxic Masculinity'

Mark Tapson

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Pipelines: Where Even Conservatives Support Eminent-Domain Abuse

Doug Hornig

Where is the conservative commitment to property rights? At first, this might seem a silly question. Of course conservatives defend the right to private property, arguably the single most...

How Do You Solve a Problem Like North Korea?

Jonah Goldberg

The first step in thinking through a problem is to ask whether it's a problem at all. Problems without solutions, the saying goes, aren't problems. They're facts. Some people argue that a...

Trump's Insubordination Problem

Rich Lowry

Donald Trump told us that he'd hire the best people. He didn't mention that he'd be unable to fire them. The president is experiencing a bout of insubordination from his top officials the...

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Out of the Ashes: Rebuilding American Culture

Anthony Esolen

'Our culture suffers from many debilitating diseases. Anthony Esolen's voice is **a much-needed tonic**. Here's hoping America heeds his counsel.'
— *R. R. Reno*, editor, *First Things*

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Hurricane Harvey

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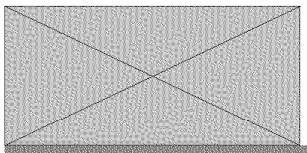
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Fri 9/1/2017 12:30:21 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: Fuel Shortages Expected to Spread East Following Cutback in Shipments From Texas

To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Fri 9/8/2017 12:34:20 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: Florida AG Cites Complaints of Price Gouging at Chevron Gas Stations Ahead of Irma's Arrival

To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Environmental Law360
Sent: Fri 9/8/2017 7:56:36 AM
Subject: [SPAM] Trump Nominates Hunton & Williams Atty For EPA Air Job



ENVIRONMENTAL

What Do You Think About 3rd Party Litigation Funding?

Take Our Survey

Friday, September 8, 2017

TOP NEWS

Trump Nominates Hunton & Williams Atty For EPA Air Job

President Donald Trump on Thursday nominated Hunton & Williams LLP administrative law group head William Wehrum to head up the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's air office. **Read more »**

EPA Tells DC Circ. CPP Withdrawal Rule Coming This Fall

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency told the D.C. Circuit Thursday that it was on track to release a new rule withdrawing the Obama-era Clean Power Plan this fall, asking the court to keep a challenge to the rule's validity on hold while it rewrites the previous administration's cornerstone environmental policy. **Read more »**

NRDC, Others Sue DOT Over Fuel Efficiency Penalty Delay

A trio of environmental groups sued the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on Thursday in the Second Circuit, asking the appellate court to review and reverse a recent delay to an Obama-era rule raising penalties on automakers that don't meet fuel efficiency standards. **Read more »**

Solar Cos. Pick Up Allies In Pursuit Of Sweeping Duties

Two companies that are looking to impose across-the-board restrictions on imported solar cells continued to pick up broad support this week, as certain corners of the steel, labor and agricultural communities threw their weight behind the closely watched case. **Read more »**

Analysis

Tax Reform Isn't One-Size-Fits-All For Energy Industry

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Dykema

President Donald Trump's choice of a North Dakota refinery for a speech on tax reform Wednesday hinted that tax relief for the energy sector might be in the cards. But different types of energy companies want different things, and measures that could help one segment of the industry might actually harm another. Here, energy tax experts outline what issues will be on the respective wish lists of the oil and gas, power and renewable sectors. **Read more »**

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POLICY & REGULATION

FERC Nominees Commit To Enforcement, Regulatory Goals

President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission told senators on Thursday he's committed to fulfilling the body's enforcement responsibilities and looking for opportunities to modernize its regulatory framework. **Read more »**

Pa. Enviro Board Slashes Co.'s $1.5M Pollution Fine To $215K

A Pennsylvania appeals board on Wednesday agreed to slash a $1.5 million fine levied against a Carlyle Group LP-backed chemical producer after concluding that the state's Department of Environmental Protection had improperly calculated emissions from a Philadelphia-area plant. **Read more »**

NM Dems Urge Gov't Not To Break Deal On Protected Land

Both U.S. senators from New Mexico and one of its representatives, all Democrats, told Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Wednesday that they objected to government lease sales on land near the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, saying such deals would violate a promise to suspend leasing during a resource management review. **Read more »**

Senate Passes Hurricane Aid, Gov't Funding Extension Bill

The U.S. Senate passed a measure that would provide $15.2 billion in funds for Hurricane Harvey cleanup Thursday, which also contained provisions to keep the government open and avoid a debt default until December. **Read more »**

ENFORCEMENT

EU Consumer Authorities Pressure VW On Emissions Fixes

European Union consumer authorities and the European Commission on Thursday called on the head of Volkswagen to fix all the cars in the bloc with emissions-cheating software in the next few months as the German automaker pledged to do last year. **Read more »**

LITIGATION

Hawaii High Court Halts Unlimited Collection Of Reef Fish

The Hawaii Supreme Court on Wednesday said the state has been violating its own environmental protection laws by issuing permits for the unrestricted collection of fish from coastal waters for aquariums. **Read more »**

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Texas 1st Responders Sue Arkema Over Post-Blast Fumes

Seven first responders who sued Arkema Inc. in Texas court Thursday won a same-day temporary restraining order that the chemicals maker preserve evidence, including air-quality samples taken at its plant after fumes from a series of explosions sent police and medical personnel to the hospital. **Read more »**

NY Pipeline Permit Nix Shows Overreach, 2nd Circ. Told

National Fuel Gas Supply Corp., which has had a New York water quality permit for its proposed $455 million natural gas pipeline rejected, told the Second Circuit Wednesday the state's denial of another unrelated pipeline water permit shows a pattern of improper decision-making by the state. **Read more »**

Westchester Must Face Chem Co.'s Cleanup Coverage Claims

An Illinois federal judge on Thursday refused to grant Westchester a quick win on Velsicol Chemical LLC's claims for coverage of its costs in connection with a slew of environmental cleanup actions and personal injury suits, finding that multiple factual issues preclude a ruling in the insurer's favor. **Read more »**

Fiat Seeks To Trim Emissions Claims From Investors' Suit

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV has urged a New York federal judge to again toss emissions-related allegations by investors accusing executives of falsely stating Chrysler vehicles didn't contain "defeat devices" in an effort to inflate share prices, arguing the investors still haven't proven company officials knew about the software. **Read more »**

USFS Gets Court OK On Mine-Related Enviro Review In Ariz.

Citizen groups and a Native American tribe were unable to show a mining company's data-collection project on U.S. Forest Service land in Arizona was sufficiently connected to a proposed mine to warrant treating them as the same project for the purposes of environmental review, an Arizona federal judge ruled Wednesday. **Read more »**

EXPERT ANALYSIS

DC Circ. Ruling Could Change Pipeline Review Procedure

The D.C. Circuit's recent decision in Sierra Club v. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may change the environmental review procedure for approving natural gas pipeline projects. If the majority's ruling stands, pipeline developers will need to ensure that reviews for future projects include a comprehensive greenhouse gas analysis of potential downstream effects, say James Thompson and Katy Larkins of Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP.

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Opinion

Cartel Case Against German Automakers Unlikely To Succeed

At first the cartel allegations plaguing the German auto industry seemed like a slam-dunk, but now the case is not as clear. Any antitrust claim against the German auto industry has two major hurdles to overcome, says David Balto, a former policy director of the Federal Trade Commission Bureau of Competition. **Read more »**

LEGAL INDUSTRY

If You Want Legal Work, Don't Be A Jerk, GCs Say

A group of general counsel speaking at a Federal Bar Association event at Stanford Law School Thursday agreed that they avoid hiring litigators who act like jerks in the courtroom, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a cool demeanor when representing their high-profile brands. **Read more »**

Trump Taps 16 For Judiciary, Including Ex-Jones Day Atty

President Donald Trump nominated 16 federal judges on Thursday, including White House attorney and ex-Jones Day partner Gregory Katsas for the D.C. Circuit, the White House said. **Read more »**

Justice Thomas Defends Originalist Perspective In Texas Talk

Though he doesn't subscribe to the label that he's an originalist or textualist, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas' starting place in interpreting the U.S. Constitution is always to first read it, he said Thursday at an event in Waco, Texas. **Read more »**

Atty Fights Subpoena For Tell-All Book On Ex-Willkie Partner

A lawyer whose communications with a former Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP partner infamously blew up an American Express Co. settlement is now fighting a subpoena for documents from that attorney as she fights criminal fraud charges, saying a tell-all book he has written about the earlier antitrust litigation is off limits. **Read more »**

12% Of Attys Appearing In PTAB Cases Are Women: Report

A new study of gender diversity at law firms compiled by Docket Alarm that's based on a count of how often female attorneys actually appear in courtroom litigation shows that only 12 percent of attorneys who appear before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board are women, according to research published Wednesday. **Read more »**

Calif. Bar Sends Exam Score Issue To State Justices

The California State Bar's Board of Trustees has asked the state Supreme Court to make the final call on a proposal to change the passing score for the bar exam, the organization announced Wednesday. **Read more »**

Fla. Bar Prez Tells Attys To Lend A Legal Hand In Irma's Wake

The Florida Bar's president chimed in Wednesday as the Sunshine State hunkered down in preparation for Hurricane Irma, urging bar members to be ready to serve as resources for those needing legal help in the aftermath of the powerful storm, as well as Hurricane Harvey, which battered swaths of Texas late last month. **Read more »**

Law360's Weekly Verdict: Legal Lions & Lambs

A team of three U.K. lawyers triumphed as top legal lions this week with a victory for Intel in its appeal to the EU's highest court of a $1.26 billion antitrust penalty, while Beck Redden became a legal lamb after a jury slammed its client, Johnson & Johnson unit Ethicon, with a $57.1 million verdict over defective pelvic mesh implants. **Read more »**

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Europea Commis

Europea Union

Executiv Office of the Presider

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Office of the Federal Register

San Carlos Apache Nation

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Bureau of Indian Affairs

Bureau of Land Management

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To: Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]
From: Seager, Cheryl
Sent: Thur 8/31/2017 2:24:25 PM
Subject: Fwd: Arkema - Crosby, TX

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Thompson, Steve" <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Date: August 31, 2017 at 9:23:40 AM CDT
To: "Seager, Cheryl" <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>
Subject: Arkema - Crosby, TX

No federal inspections at the facility within the last 5 years

A review of ICIS:

- Most recent state compliance activity listed as an investigation in October 2016 (unsure of whether this was on-site or off-site)

- Last state onsite inspection at the facility was in April 2014

- No formal enforcement actions listed

To: Hurricane Harvey Principals[Hurricane_Harvey_Principals@epa.gov]
Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: McDowell, Justin
Sent: Wed 8/30/2017 1:49:52 PM
Subject: Hurricane Harvey 08-30-2017 0800 Final Update
8-30-17 0800 Update Final.pdf

Justin McDowell
Environmental Life Scientist
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Region 6 (MC 6EN-AS)
1445 Ross Avenue - Suite 1200

Dallas, TX 75202-2733

(214) 665-6557 (desk) (214) 665-3177 (fax)
McDowell.Justin@epa.gov

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Tropical Storm Harvey 2017
8/30/2017 – 0800 CDT Update

Highlights

Texas

EPA has deployed its aerial assessment aircraft to assess the conditions at the Arkema faciliy in Crosby and continues to assist the TCEQ, our primary regulatory partner in Texas. The equipment on the aerial assessment aircraft will be able to detect chemical leaks, thermally image the facility and obtain aerial photos of current site conditions. This information will help first responders in their preparations. EPA worked with the Department of Homeland Security to develop plume modeling to provide to local responders. The plume modeling indicated the offsite consequences of the chemical of concern, which are organic peroxide, sulfur dioxide, and chlorine.

The facility is without power and has lost their backup power source for one of the containers. The contents of that container is approaching auto-ignition temperatures and could potentially detonate within the next 24 hours. The area is evacuated due to flooding, local first responders are in the area conducting search and rescue. These personnel were evacuated from the area.

EPA, TCEQ, Texas General Land Office (TGLO) and US Coast Guard are operating in Unified Command. Four EPA Incident Management Team members are in Corpus Christi, Texas today August 30, 2016 to establish the unified command center.

On August 30, 2017 the Unified Command will have seven teams in the field conducting reconnaissance. The teams will consist of Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Civil Support Core, EPA, and a Coast Guard strike team.

Two National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund sites will be inspected to asses impacts from the hurricane today, August 30, 2017. The two sites are the Falcon Refinery Site and the Brine Service site both located in Corpus Christi, Texas.

On August 30, 2017, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) reported the South Texas Project (STP) nuclear power facility, located in Bay City, Texas continues to operate at full power as of 7:20 AM EDT, August 28, per the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Power Reactor Status Report. Their storm team of 175 continue to manage safe operations.

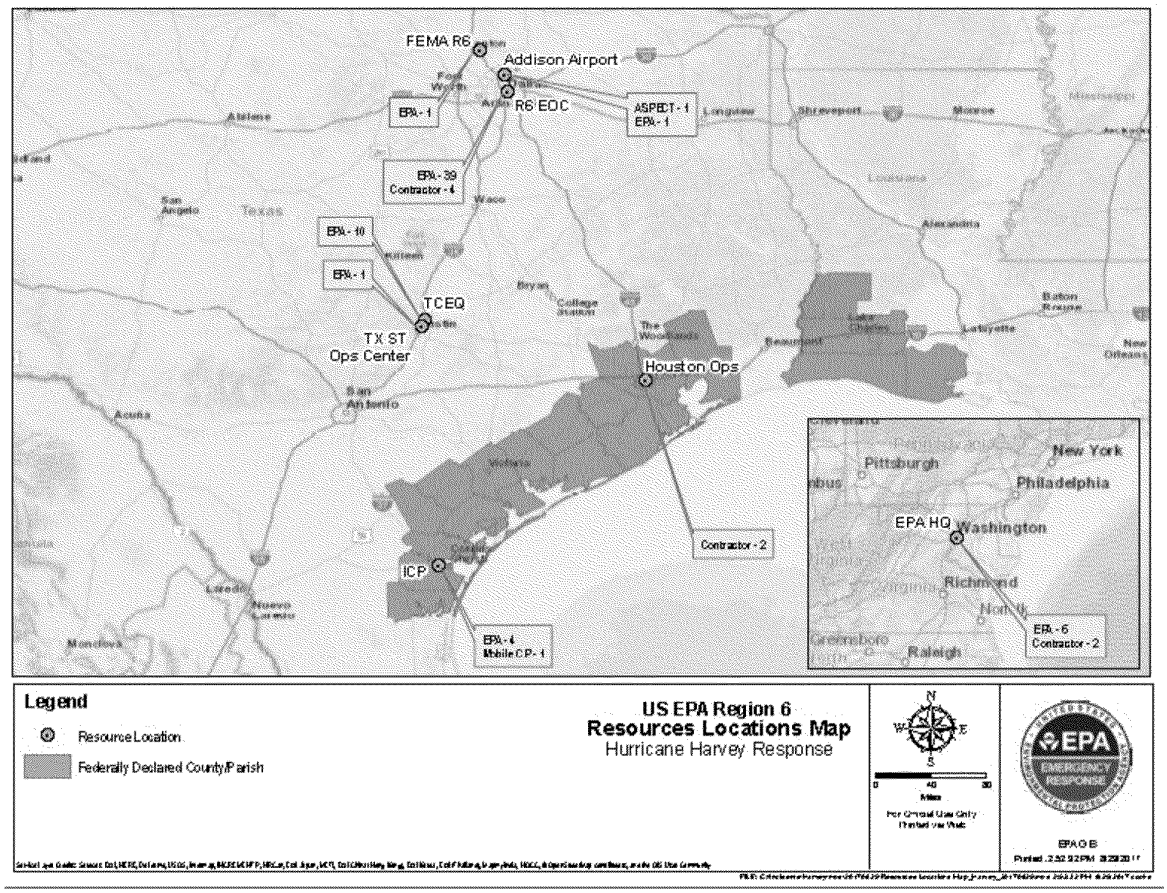
Administrator will visit Corpus Christi today and the State Operations Center in Austin tomorrow.

Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is monitoring for flooding and no additional parishes have been declared since August 28, 2017. Harvey is expected to strengthen and cause heavy rain in Southwest Louisiana. A tropical storm warning is in effect for Jefferson and Orange Counties and Calcasieu, Cameron, Jeff Davis, Vermilion, Iberia, and St. Mary Parishes.

Resources

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	Texas SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	HQ EOC Wash DC	Totals
EPA	40	1	2	10		6	6	61
START	3				2	2		7
IT Contractor	1						2	3
TOTAL	43	1	1	10	2	4	8	69



Industrial Sources

On August 29, 2017, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality reported that Valero's Corpus Christi refinery will begin start-up operations over the next four to six days. During this start-up procedure they will be running at 60% capacity.

Spill/Release Response

Hotline Calls as of 1500 on August 29, 2017	
Number of Harvey Related Calls Received During Reporting Period	8
Total Number of Harvey Related Calls to Date	36

Seven Hazard Evaluation teams will be in the field on Wednesday August 30, 2017. The teams will focus on Corpus Christi, Portland, and Port Aransas. One Oil Discharge Assessment Team consisting of US Coast Guard (USCG) Strike Team members will visit multiple locations based on information from evaluations entered into Response Manager. One Emergency Response Team consisting of two USCG members will be formed and available if needed.

EPA Emergency Response Assets
EPA's aerial assessment aircraft will conduct aerial reconnaissance over the Corpus Christi area on August 30, 2017, as weather permits.

Surface and Flood Water Quality Monitoring
EPA surface and flood water sampling plan to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminates found in storm water has been completed.

Drinking Water / Wastewater Assessments
The EPA Region 6 Drinking and Wastewater Team will mobilize to Corpus Christi, Texas to assist with drinking water and waste water field assessments on Thursday, August 31, 2017. One Water Infrastructure team consisting of two TCEQ staff is slated to visit two systems based on information developed by the TCEQ/EPA call bank in Austin, TX.

EPA is supporting TCEQ in contacting drinking water and waste water systems. Current status as of 1700 on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. EPA deployed 10 personnel to assist TCEQ's Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin, Texas.

Drinking Water Systems- Total # of Systems: 4510

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending	56
Out of Contact	32
On generator – lost pressure	5
No problems	210
On generator – never lost pressure	15
No Status	4155
Lost pressure & or Treatment	7
Site visit needed	2
Lifted boil water notice due to negative bacterial samples. Normal operations resumed	8
Not Operating	20

Wastewater Systems - Total # of Systems: 2466

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending - Phone evaluation only	41
Out of Contact - phone evaluation only	6
No Problems	250
No Status	2127
Waste Water Treat. Plant and/or Collection on Generator or bypass pumps for Lift Station	16
Waste Water Treat. Plant and/or Collection non-operational no Sanitary Sewer Overflow	19
WWTP and/or Collection Partially Operational Sanitary Sewer Overflow	7

Texas Public Drinking Water System – Boiled Water Notices (as reported by TCEQ)

	Systems	Population
Boil Water Notices (BWN)	48	91,575
Shutdown	20	92,658
Total	68	184,233

EPA Laboratory/ Analytical Services

The Houston laboratory is reporting that they will be closed until Tuesday September 5, 2017. The laboratory and office building is not damaged. EPA has back up capabilities for laboratory services should the Houston facility remain closed.

EPA's organic chemical mobile laboratory is enroute from Denver, Colorado to the Corpus Christi area. The anticipated arrival in Corpus Christi is Friday September 1, 2017. The mobile laboratory will be utilized to process environmental samples.

Data Management

Region 6 activated the National Data team to provide support data management activities in Corpus Christi. Two Data Team members have been deployed and are expected to arrive in Corpus Christi by Friday September 1, 2017.

Communications

EPA is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA communication structure and management, and participates in the daily National Incident Communication Conference Line (NICCL) call. EPA has initiated its Crisis Communication Plan to ensure rapid response to providing coordinated, accurate, up-to-date information regarding its field activities. EPA's Public Information Office will be established in Dallas with forward field components as needed to support the HQ Office of Public Affairs.

Refineries/Fuel Waivers

1. TEXAS: EPA has approved the State of Texas' request to extend the Texas fuel waiver to allow use of non-road diesel fuel in on-road applications. This non-road fuel has different tax treatment, and to differentiate it, is colored with red dye. We need to waive the limitations in our regulations and then IRS needs to issue a waiver as well.

2. LOUISIANA: A waiver that would allow use of 9.0lb. RVP was approved on 28 August.

3. GEORGIA: The fuels team is continuing to investigate the fuel supply issue. It is likely that we will need to issue a waiver soon.

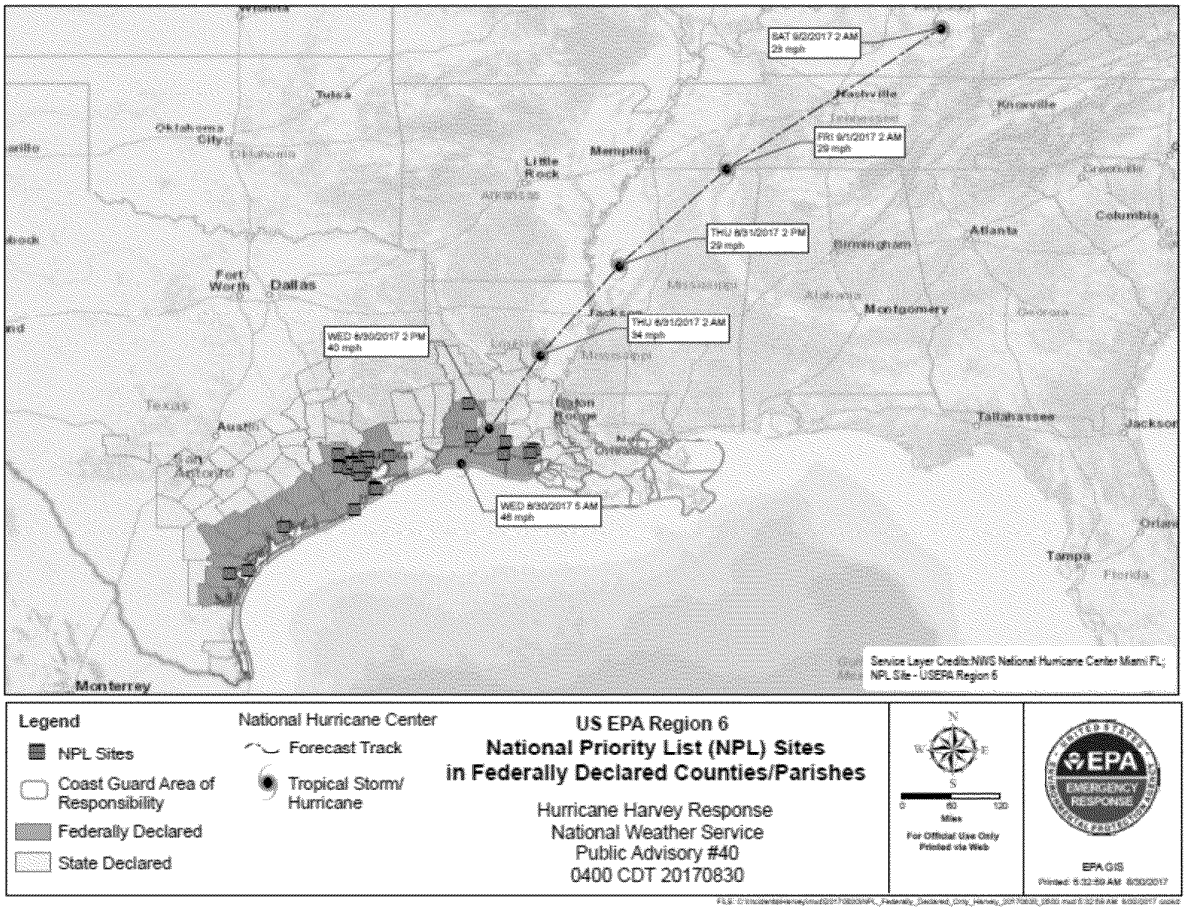
4. OKLAHOMA: A statewide low Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fuel waiver request was submitted on August 28, 2017.

5. The Renewable Fuels Association submitted a request to relax the RVP to 10 psi.

Funding
EPA has received a Mission Assignment (MA) to assist the State of Texas with drinking water, wastewater and Hazmat recovery operations. This Mission Assignment for $8.5 million added 170 EPA and USCG personnel to the TCEQ Hurricane Harvey response in Corpus Christi, Houston and surrounding impacted areas. This MA is for support of assessment and response operations to actual or threatened spill or release of hazardous materials and oil. Assistance includes response to release/discharges from fixed facilities, as well as orphaned containers and mobile sources. The estimated daily burn rate for this MA is currently $26,460.

Superfund NPL Sites
Two National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund sites will be inspected to asses impacts from the hurricane today, August 30, 2017. The two sites are the Falcon Refinery Site and the Brine Service site both located in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Region 6 Remedial Project Managers continue to monitor and assess the status of NPL sites in the impacted areas. Some sites continue to be inundated with flood water. Assessments of those site will be conducted as flood waters recede. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site is experiencing severe flooding. The highest point of the temporary cap is under 5-feet of flood water. Floodwaters are not expected to recede for several days. The US Oil Recovery Site responsible parties notified the NRC that low-levels of contaminants in residual sludges from the former wastewater treatment plant are being released into floodwaters. Other impacted sites are experiencing varying degrees of flooding with no reported releases.



Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties **8/30/2017**

SITE NAME	STATE	COUNTY	Status Summary
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	TX	CALHOUN	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
BRINE SERVICE CO.	TX	NUECES	RI underway, Impacted
BRIO REFINING INC.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
FALCON REFINERY	TX	SAN PATRICIO	RI underway, Impacted
FRENCH, LTD.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	TX	BRAZORIA	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	TX	HARRIS	GW Remedy Underway, No Reported Impact
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Underway, Impacted
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
MOTCO, INC.	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
PATRICK BAYOU	TX	HARRIS	RI Underway, Impacted
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	TX	LIBERTY	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	TX	HARRIS	Temporary Cap, impacted
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
TEX-TIN CORP.	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
US OIL RECOVERY	TX	HARRIS	RI Underway, Impacted
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	LA	BEAUREGARD	Pre-RI, No Reported Impact
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	LA	CALCASIEU	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	LA	CAMERON	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
SBA SHIPYARD	LA	JEFFERSON DAVIS	RI Underway, No Reported Impact
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, Reported Impact
D.L. MUD, INC.	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact

Legend of NPL Site Status Summary Indicators	
Impacted	Direct information of storm damage: flooding or wind
No Reported Impact	Direct information of no storm damage
Status not Confirmed	No available information-site not accessible

To: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Thompson, Steve
Sent: Thur 8/31/2017 2:23:40 PM
Subject: Arkema - Crosby, TX

No federal inspections at the facility within the last 5 years

A review of ICIS:

- Most recent state compliance activity listed as an investigation in October 2016 (unsure of whether this was on-site or off-site)

- Last state onsite inspection at the facility was in April 2014

- No formal enforcement actions listed

region6news

Tuesday, October 03, 2017

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribal Nations

Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.
To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email R6Press@epa.gov.

1 — How Louisiana protects and restores a privately owned coast, Times Picayune, 10/3/17
http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/10/oil_terminal_opens_at_site_of.html#incart_river_index
A new petroleum storage facility in St. John the Baptist Parish could add as much as $1.5 million to the price tag of a high priority coastal restoration project, according to documents obtained by NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune. The added cost is raising questions about how the state negotiates building restoration projects on private property.

2 — Parishes seek levee district help for permits to dredge, de-snag Bayou Manchac, Times Picayune, 10/2/17
http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_f7a02432-a78a-11e7-980e-1fc9898087d2.html
The parish presidents of East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Iberville parishes want the Pontchartrain Levee District to take the lead in a plan to clear and dredge portions of Bayou Manchac. Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa and Iberville Parish President Mitch Ourso sent the levee commission president a letter last week asking for help with permitting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies.

3 — An Absent EPA Climate Report, And A Tale Of Two Flooded Superfund Sites, NPR, 9/29/17
http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/09/29/553696314/an-absent-epa-climate-report-and-a-tale-of-two-flooded-superfund-sites
Hurricane Harvey flooded more than a dozen Superfund toxic waste sites when it devastated the Texas coast in late August. An EPA report predicted the possibility of climate-related problems at toxic waste sites like those in Texas, but the page detailing the report on the agency's website was made inactive months before the storm. The Environmental Protection Agency's 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan warned that those in charge of cleaning up Superfund sites should explicitly plan for more rain, bigger floods and "increased intensity of hurricanes."

4 — Harvey knocked out dozens of Texas water, sewer systems, SAC Bee, 10/2/17
http://www.sacbee.com/news/business/article176678791.html
State and federal environmental agencies report Harvey knocked out five drinking-water systems and seven sewage systems in the 58 Texas counties covered by Gov. Greg Abbott's disaster declaration. In a joint statement issued Monday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality also reported that 38 other drinking-water systems are under boil-water notices.

5 — GENERAL MOTORS IS GOING ALL ELECTRIC, Wired, 10/2/17
https://www.wired.com/story/general-motors-electric-cars-plan-gm/
AFTER MORE THAN a century peddling vehicles that pollute the atmosphere, General Motors is ending its relationship with gasoline and diesel. This morning, the American automotive giant announced that it is working toward an all-electric, zero-emissions future. That starts with two new, fully electric models next year—then at least 18 more by 2023.

6 — Austin Energy to turn over Holly Power Plant site by December, Austin Monitor, 10/3/17
https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2017/10/austin-energy-turn-holly-power-plant-site-december/
The bitter reminder of decades of pollution that the Holly Street Power Plant presents to the residents of the Holly neighborhood will soon disappear. As of the Parks and Recreation Board meeting on Sept. 26, the plant is in its final phase of decommissioning before the land will be transferred from Austin Energy into the hands of the Parks and Recreation Department

7 — Oil producers concerned about permit backlog, Santa Fe New Mexican, 10/3/17
http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/oil-producers-concerned-about-permit-backlog/article_70bc1750-6134-5155-81c8-8ea1adefe09c.html
The cost of drilling for oil and natural gas on public and tribal land went up slightly nationwide, thanks to a fee hike that took effect over the weekend. But New Mexico producers said Monday they are more worried about a continued backlog in the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's processing of permits. The delays are costing New Mexico and the federal government taxes and royalties, according to the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association.

8 — Llano County commissioner weigh in on proposed Burnet County rock crusher, Daily Trib, 10/2/17
http://www.dailytrib.com/2017/10/02/llano-county-commissioners-weigh-proposed-burnet-county-rock-crusher/#ixzz4uSWEsz87
Llano County commissioners sidestepped sending a resolution in opposition to a proposed rock crushing operation and opted instead to send individual letters to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which is considering Asphalt Inc.'s air quality permit. The resolution offered by Llano County Pct. 1 Commissioner Peter Jones on Sept. 25 outlined the potential impact on Llano County residents, even though the proposed plant would be located in neighboring Burnet County.

9 — Government Report Says FEMA Flood Mapping Program Needs Improvement, Houston Public Media, 10/2/17
http://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/energy-environment/2017/10/02/240081/government-report-says-fema-flood-mapping-program-needs-improvement/
A new government report says FEMA's flood mapping program is outdated and mismanaged. The report from Homeland Security's Inspector General's Office says that more than half of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood maps aren't accurate, and the problem won't be fixed without some changes. Specifically, the audit found that as of late 2016, only 42% of the flood maps were up to date

10 — This Year's Atlantic Hurricane Season Is Third Worst on Record, Bloomberg, 10/2/17
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-02/-extremely-active-hurricane-season-is-third-worst-on-record?cmpId=flipboard
This year's Atlantic hurricane season has been the third-most active on record, and there are still more than eight weeks to go. The basin produced more tropical cyclones at this point in the season, which ends on Nov. 30, only in 1933 and 2004, according to the National Hurricane Center. Meanwhile, September set a record for Accumulated Cyclone Energy, a measure that combines the intensity and duration of storms. Four tropical cyclones formed in September, all of which became hurricanes, with three growing into major hurricanes. That doesn't even include hurricane Irma and Harvey, which formed in August.

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

How Louisiana protects and restores a privately owned coast

Updated on October 3, 2017 at 7:02 AM
Posted on October 3, 2017 at 7:00 AM

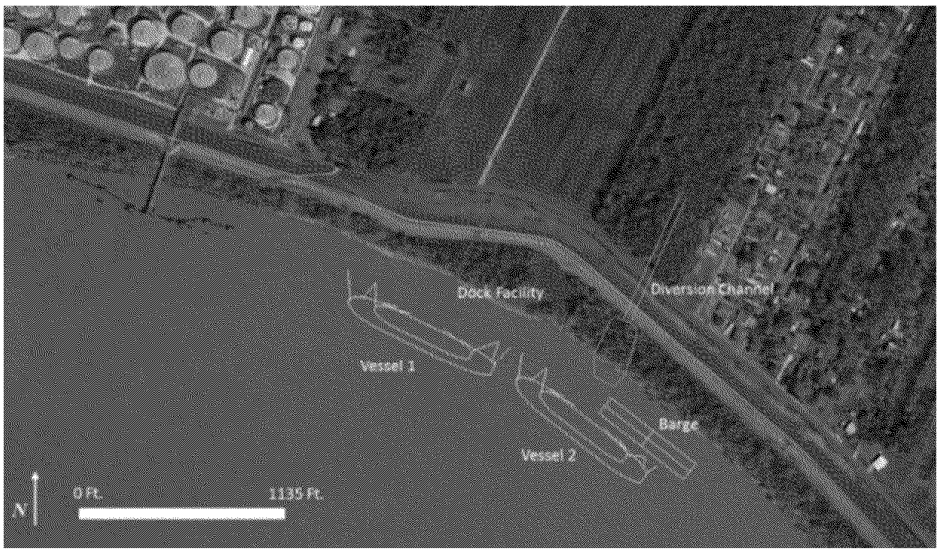
Comment 2 shares

By Sara Sneath
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

A new petroleum storage facility in St. John the Baptist Parish could add as much as $1.5 million to the price tag of a high priority coastal restoration project, according to documents obtained by NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune. The added cost is raising questions about how the state negotiates building restoration projects on private property.

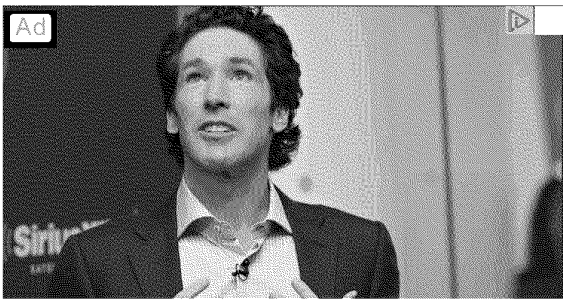
The documents, obtained through a public record request, indicate that state officials corresponded with Pin Oak Terminals, the company that owns the new chemical storage facility, for four years through more than 500 emails. During that time, state officials signed a

nondisclosure agreement and split the price of a $109,000 study with the company to ensure the petroleum storage facility could coexist with the coastal restoration project.



With about 80 percent of the Louisiana coast privately owned, it's not surprising that the state would need to work out deals with landowners in order to construct projects to protect coastal residents and infrastructure. But environmental advocates questioned whether the state's willingness to negotiate with landowners out of public view is compromising the goal of preserving the coast.

State officials have long touted their willingness to work with industry, calling the disappearing seashore a "working coast." The project near the Pin Oak Terminals facility is the second of five coastal restoration projects sought for fast tracking permitting by Gov. John Bel Edwards that is under a memorandum of agreement with a private company.



Joel Very Upset With Wife

Duler Visit Site

But with nearly 2,000 square miles of land lost since the 1930s, it's time that the state takes bold steps toward restoring the coast, said Scott Eustis, a coastal wetland specialist with the environmental group Gulf Restoration Network.

"They say it's a working coast," Eustis said. "I don't know if they've noticed, but the coast isn't working anymore."

The state first developed plans to build a coastal restoration project at the site of the new petroleum storage facility near Garyville in 1993. The project would reconnect the Mississippi River with Maurepas Swamp, between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Levees along the river cut off the swamp in 1814, depriving it of river nutrients and sediment. Without sediment to replenish the swamp floor, the sinking land constantly floods.

Saltwater intrusion from Lake Pontchartrain is killing bald cypress trees. Constant flooding means new cypress and tupelo tree seeds can't germinate. As a result, the swamp is converting to marsh.

To make the swamp healthy, the state wants to build a gated structure in the Mississippi River levee to pull water and send it through nearly 5-1/2 miles of channels to Maurepas Swamp. The estimated tab is $186.9 million, according to the state's coastal protection and restoration authority.

The state has spent $10 million to date, said Brad Miller, the project manager. This month, the state announced that it received a $14.2 million grant to engineer, design and seek permits for the project. The money comes from Clean Water Act penalties paid by BP and others responsible for the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil disaster.

In 2012, Pin Oak Terminals purchased the site where the Maurepas Swamp diversion is planned from a company named Safeland Storage. Before Safeland sold the site, the company sought a permit through the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources to build a chemical storage facility, like the one Pin Oak Terminals recently built.

In 2010, Miller emailed a Louisiana Department of Natural Resources employee to confirm that the storage facility and Maurepas Swamp Diversion project could coexist.

To print the document, click the "Original Document" link to open the original PDF. At this time it is not possible to print the document with annotations.

"The assumption was made that if a dock facility was constructed first, that the construction of the (Maurepas Swamp) diversion structure would be possible but a little more complicated and expensive," Miller wrote. The email said a temporary cofferdam system required by the placement of the storage facility could raise the cost of the Maurepas Swamp diversion by $1.57 million.

In a recent interview, Miller said the price would likely be less. He did not provide a new estimate.

"That number is not accurate anymore but there could be some increased costs with constructing the diversion there," he said. "They can coexist just fine ... It's just construction logistics."

The study the state and the company paid for concluded the dock for the chemical storage facility would not impede the flow of water into the diversion. It also said that any spill

of bitumen, a chemical stored at the facility, would not make its way into the diversion -- in all modeled scenarios, the bitumen mixed with river water, descended toward the bottom of the river and washed downstream of the diversion, the study concluded.

To print the document, click the "Original Document" link to open the original PDF. At this time it is not possible to print the document with annotations.

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After four years of negotiations, state officials and Pin Oak employees signed an agreement to share construction plans and avoid disrupting each other's projects.

The state looks at every project site individually when determining the most cost-effective way to build on privately owned land, said Richelle Moore, general counsel for the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

"Historically, we've been able to acquire easements at no cost," she said. "We don't buy property if we don't need to. We have a good track record of acquiring the bare minimum of acquisitions."

The four properties owned by Pin Oak Terminals have a combined assessed value of $1.1 million according to the St. John the Baptist Assessor's Office website. The Louisiana Tax Commission requires that properties are valued between 90 percent to 95 percent of their market value. But that doesn't stop a landowner from selling property for more than the market value, or refusing to sell.

The assessed value of the land is about $463,000 less than the estimated cost of building around the petroleum storage facility, not including the $54,500 the state spent on the feasibility study or the cost of state employee time.

Eustis said the state should have purchased the property before the oil terminal was built. "If this is essential for the state to function, it should just be under eminent domain," he said, referring to the law allowing expropriation of private property for a public purpose, with compensation.

But a new law that went into effect in June could make it more difficult for the state to use eminent domain. Unless owners with at least seventy-five percent ownership in the property voluntarily sell the land to the state, officials will need to prove to a court that full ownership of the property is necessary to carry out the purpose of the project.

During a time when the state needs to take action more than ever to restore the coast, the new law seems to give the state less power, said John Costonis, a chancellor emeritus and professor of law at Louisiana State University's law school.

Over the course of the next 50 years, the state will attempt to build 124 projects included in its $50 billion coastal master plan on land that's 80 percent privately owned, according to the plan.

"The notion strikes me as misconceived that the state should self-impose constraints on its ability to meet this challenge lest coastal landowners incur constitutionally legitimate limitations on the use of their property," Costonis said. "Property, which absent the state's coastal program, will in large part and over time disappear under an encroaching sea."

State officials say that the new law will have little impact on the coastal master plan because the state rarely, if ever, uses eminent domain to purchase land for coastal restoration and protection projects. If eminent domain is needed, the state would likely be able to make its case in court, said David Peterson, general counsel for the state's coastal protection and restoration authority.

The state typically builds coastal protection and restoration projects on private land through servitudes, also called easements, which allow the landowner to retain some rights to the property. "In Louisiana, folks don't want to give up full ownership, even if there's a levee on top of the property," Peterson said. In northern Louisiana, farmers run their cattle on the levees, he said.

The new law will actually make it easier for the state to negotiate with private landowners about coastal restoration projects because it requires that easements end at the life of the project, unless the landowners voluntarily agree to a longer term, said Rep. Jerome Zeringue, R-Houma, who authored the new legislation. "This bill was intended to expedite the process and allow the state to move forward on projects."

The new oil terminal in St. John the Baptist Parish received its first shipment of product this month. But the state could find itself needing to make deals with a new company soon. The site of another high priority coastal restoration project, the Mid-Barataria sediment diversion in Plaquemines Parish, went up for sale last month.

Touted as the state's most ambitious project to restore the coast, the Mid-Barataria diversion would open up the Mississippi River's West Bank levee near Ironton and Myrtle Grove, with the intent to rebuild land in Barataria Bay.

The state conducted feasibility studies for building a coal terminal at the site of the diversion and signed an agreement with the last landowner, RAM Terminals. The state hasn't made clear whether it intends to purchase the property. "We're looking into that," Peterson said.

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http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_f7a02432-a78a-11e7-980e-1fc9898087d2.html

Parishes seek levee district help for permits to dredge, de-snag Bayou Manchac

BY DAVID J. MITCHELL | DMITCHELL@THEADVOCATE.COM OCT 2, 2017 - 11:01 AM

David Mitchell

The parish presidents of East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Iberville parishes want the Pontchartrain Levee District to take the lead in a plan to clear and dredge portions of Bayou Manchac.

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa and Iberville Parish President Mitch Ourso sent the levee commission president a letter last week asking for help with permitting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies.

"Your regional scope and expertise makes the Pontchartrain Levee District the ideal candidate to serve as an applicant (for the permits)," the parish leaders wrote in the Sept. 27 letter.

Story Continued Below

The letter comes after the parish leaders and those for Livingston and St. James parishes met in January for a regional drainage summit to discuss possible responses to the March and August oods of 2016.

Some environmentalists raised concerns previously that dredging and removal of native trees could affect the aquatic health of the state's historic and scenic river, but state Sen. Mack "Bodi" White, R-Baton Rouge, authored legislation earlier this year exempting some dredging restrictions on the bayou, as well as other scenic waterways.

Of cials from the parishes and engineering rms took a tour of the bayou last week to highlight problem areas. Then a few days later the representatives from the Corps of Engineers, levee district, Ascension Parish and others met in Matassa's of ce in Gonzales about improvements to the bayou.

Matassa said that corps of cials told him then that one permit applicant would be needed for the project. It will need three different kinds of permits, including a wetlands permit from the corps, the parish leaders say in the letter.

"At the meeting, I asked the Pontchartrain Levee District if they would go after the permit," Matassa said Monday.

He said that Blaine Sheets, a levee district commissioner at that meeting, then told him that if Matassa got all three parishes to sign off in a letter asking the levee district to get the permit, Sheets would bring it to the full commission. Matassa said East Baton Rouge and Iberville of cials later agreed.

Ricky Bosco, president of the levee board, said the district received the request Monday and it would be presented to the full levee Board of Commissioners, as are other requests from parishes in the levee district.

"We are looking forward to moving this matter forward in an effort to address concerns of the affected residents and businesses of the area," Bosco said.

The district is responsible for the east bank Mississippi River levees between the Jefferson-St. Charles Parish line and Baton Rouge, as well as 10 miles of hurricane protection levee in St. Charles, but also has a hand in other drainage, coastal restoration and ood protection projects and studies, including those laying out previously stalled plans for Manchac.

The parishes were divided over that older plan, coordinated through the levee district, which proposed dredging and new drainage control structures to improve downstream ow but also to control backwater ooding in the bayou.

Bayou Manchac serves as a downstream drainage outlet for East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Iberville parishes, including growing parts of southern East Baton Rouge and Prairieville in northeastern Ascension, but empties into the Amite River and is susceptible to backwater ooding.

Ourso said the latest concept, as explained to him, would focus on dredging and clearing out natural blockages in the waterway, not on new drainage control structures.

Ken Dawson, chief administrative of cer for Ascension Parish, said as much, saying the parishes are still working on the extent of the proposed dredging project.

In August, Bill Roux, Ascension Parish's public works director, told the East Ascension drainage board that the parish wants to use a portion of the $33 million in federal hazard mitigation money it will receive for the August 2016 ood on the project but is also looking for cost-sharing from Iberville and East Baton Rouge. He estimated the cost then at $5 million.

Matassa added that the parishes had previously agreed to share in the cost of the work. While Ourso said he agreed with that concept, Fred Raiford, city-parish transportation and drainage director, said the city-parish supports the need for projects with regional bene ts but wants to see more modeling data on the extent of the drainage bene t before agreeing to funding.

"Those are the things that we want to look at, with factual technical data, not political data," Raiford said.

Meanwhile, Iberville has recently begun a $2.4 million project to upgrade an existing oodgate and add two new oodgates that would drain Alligator Bayou and portions of the Spanish Lake area inside Iberville into Bayou Manchac.

After the August 2016 ood, high water runoff from East Baton Rouge over-topped Manchac Road and went into Spanish Lake and Bluff Swamp, ooding homes in Ascension and Iberville parishes but also trapping the water behind the elevated Manchac Road for weeks. Of cials in Ascension and Iberville parishes were forced to make temporary road cuts to drain the area.

Manchac Road has been closed since the ood. Ourso said the road would be repaved and reopened after the oodgate project is nished in summer 2018.

Dredging and similar kinds of improvements on Bayou Manchac, a state historic and scenic river, require approval by the state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in consultation with the departments of Tourism and Environmental Quality, state Division of Administration and other agencies. State already law allowed "maintenance dredging" and snagging in Bayou Manchac, but White's legislation added "clearing." Wildlife and Fisheries retains the nal say.

The exemption, which Gov. John Bel Edwards signed June 12, doesn't take effect until June 30, 2018.

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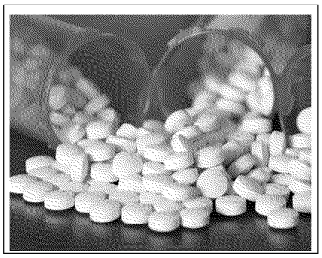

Managing the Opioid Crisis

BY ANTHEM

Opioid addiction affects 10%-12% of all workers and likely costs companies nearly $12 billion each year. Find out mor...

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- 18 booked on DWI in East Baton Rouge over the weekend, Sept. 22-24
- Louisiana singer takes a knee after singing anthem at Seahawks-Titans game in Nashville
- Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lafayette area People in Business for Oct. 1, 2017
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- Take A Peek Inside Kylie Jenner's New Mansion (Lonny Magazine)
- Deep Sea Explorers Caught This On Camera And It's Scaring The Heck Out Of Everyone (New Ravel)

- Slew of thefts reported around New Orleans Friday, Saturday

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An Absent EPA Climate Report, And A Tale Of Two Flooded Superfund Sites

September 29, 2017 · 3:16 PM ET

REBECCA HERSHER

Patrick Bayou, pictured on Sept. 2, flooded when Hurricane Harvey slammed the Houston area. The bayou is a Superfund toxic waste site. A March cleanup report for the site did not include preparations for more severe flood events as a result of climate change.

Jason Dearen/AP

Hurricane Harvey flooded more than a dozen Superfund toxic waste sites when it devastated the Texas coast in late August. An EPA report predicted the possibility of climate-related problems at toxic waste sites like those in Texas, but the page detailing the report on the agency's website was made inactive months before the storm.

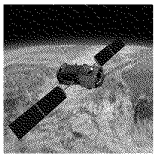
The Environmental Protection Agency's 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan warned that those in charge of cleaning up Superfund sites should explicitly plan for more rain, bigger floods and "increased intensity of hurricanes." Based on earlier EPA climate change research, the report authors recommended that the agency change how it protects people from toxic chemical releases as sea levels rise and storms get more severe.

The report was removed from the EPA website when President Trump took office in January — it last appeared on the site the day before his inauguration.

THE TWO-WAY

In Texas, Concerns About Damage To Flooded Toxic Waste Sites

"We are currently updating our website to reflect EPA's priorities under the leadership of President Trump and Administrator [Scott] Pruitt," the page now reads, with a link to an archived version of the page containing the report.



THE TWO-WAY

Trump's Budget Slashes Climate Change Funding

Such preparedness reports are reference documents for those who draft specific cleanup plans for hazardous waste sites.

Take, for example, two sites that were flooded during Harvey and don't yet have finalized cleanup agreements — the EPA's handling of the climate-preparedness document could have far-reaching implications for how these agreements are written and how contaminated sited are handled.

A toxic Texas bayou

Patrick Bayou is one such Superfund site, flooded in the midst of finalizing a cleanup plan. It's in Deer Park, Texas, about 15 miles from downtown Houston, sandwiched between the Houston Ship Channel and a sprawling complex of petrochemical facilities and separated from homes by a highway. The bayou is polluted with dangerous heavy metals including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel, selenium and zinc, as well as pesticides and petrochemicals, according to EPA testing.

The severity of the hazards posed by Patrick Bayou landed it on the EPA's National Priorities List in 2002. It often takes a decade or more for the government to reach an agreement with those responsible for cleaning up a toxic waste site, meaning responsibility for details can stretch across multiple presidential administrations.

In March of this year, the EPA published a final feasibility report on potential cleanup methods for Patrick Bayou.

The 4,411-page document discusses, in extreme detail, cleanup options and risks associated with Patrick Bayou — which is susceptible to flooding because of its location along the Ship Channel. It does not mention the EPA's 2014 report on climate change or its recommendations concerning flood risk assessment, and the words "climate change" do not appear. In sections about flood risk, the analysis does not acknowledge research suggesting that models predicting the severity and frequency of flooding are increasingly unreliable as a result of climate change.

The EPA announced on Sept. 15 that it had found no evidence of contamination at Patrick Bayou beyond what was already present before Harvey, and that the process of reaching a cleanup agreement for the site would continue.

Floodwaters from last month's storm ripped apart fences and flooded Interstate 10 east of Houston. The San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund site is just on the other side of the road.

Rebecca Hersher/NPR

Rising waters and hazardous waste pits

The language in the Patrick Bayou report is in stark contrast with a preliminary cleanup plan published less than a year earlier for the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund site about 5 miles away, sticking out into the San Jacinto River.

That much shorter document, released in September 2016 during the Obama administration, references climate change twice and notes that "future flooding may be even more intense" — which could mean some cleanup methods would be more effective than others.

Warning About Possibility Of More Severe Flooding (p. 10)

The Corps of Engineers performed an evaluation of the San Jacinto River and the armor cap using hydrodynamic and sediment transport models. These models have to predict the river conditions for a very long time because dioxin is extremely persistent in the environment and will remain toxic for a very long time. The uncertainty inherent in any quantitative analysis technique used to estimate the long-term performance of the river and cap is very high. Further, changes in the river channel due to bank erosion, shoreline breaches, etc. during a high flow event caused by a major flood or hurricane is beyond the ability of any existing sediment transport model to simulate. The changes that the river has experienced over the last 50 years as described above will likely continue in the future; and these changes are specifically what the current models cannot simulate. Therefore, the model predictions should be considered as having a very limited long term reliability.

Future flooding may be even more intense. According to the U.S. National Climate Assessment, flooding along rivers and other areas following heavy downpours and prolonged rains is exceeding the limits of flood protection infrastructure designed for historical conditions. Sea level rise, storm surge, and heavy downpours in combination with the pattern of continued development in coastal areas are increasing damage to U.S. infrastructure and are also increasing risks to ports and other installations. Because the intensity of future storms and flooding may increase, estimates regarding the ability of a cap (even a cap with increased armoring) to contain the dioxin waste material is highly uncertain.

The waste material is highly toxic and may be highly mobile in a severe storm and therefore is considered a Principal Threat Waste. The Environmental Protection Agency considers material at the Site with more than 300 ng/kg dioxin to be Principal Threat Waste. This concentration was calculated by multiplying the sediment Preliminary Remediation Goal of 30 ng/kg by a factor of 10.

Nature and Extent of Contamination – Waste Pits North of I-10

dioxin, which is one of the most toxic kinds of dioxin. Surface water samples prior to construction of the cap show that there were dioxin releases to the river (samples collected from 2002 to 2009); and the University of Houston indicated that high levels of dioxin were present in the river surrounding the Site and within a mile downstream of the Site. Dioxins biodegrade very slowly. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that, for dioxins that are Site has much more bio-concentration potential in organisms as opposed to the more highly chlorinated

10

Principal Threat Wastes

The National Contingency Plan establishes an expectation that EPA will use treatment to address the principal threats posed by a site wherever practicable (National Contingency Plan § 300.430(a)(1)(iii)(A)). In general, principal threat wastes are those source materials considered to be highly toxic or highly mobile and which generally cannot be contained in a reliable manner or would present a significant risk to human health or the environment should exposure occur. The "principal threat" concept is applied to the characterization of "source materials" at a Superfund site.

Elevated concentrations of dioxin have been detected at the Site:

- **Waste material in the waste pits (more than 43,000 ng/kg)**
- **Soil in the Southern Impoundment (more than 50,000 ng/kg).**

Dioxin is highly toxic and persistent in nature (will not breakdown for hundreds of years). With the regular occurrence of severe storms and flooding in the area, there is uncertainty that the waste material can be reliably contained over the long term and therefore should be considered potentially highly mobile due to its location in a dynamic river environment.

Because the dioxin waste in the northern impoundments and southern impoundment at the site is both highly toxic and potentially highly mobile (due to river flooding), it is considered a principal threat waste. The Environmental Protection Agency considers material at the Site with more than 300 ng/kg of dioxin to be Principal Threat Waste.

View the entire document with DocumentCloud

The San Jacinto Waste Pits were inundated during the floods, as NPR has reported. This week, the EPA announced the site had been damaged, exposing toxic waste, and that the agency was directing the companies responsible for the cleanup to fix the temporary protective cap over the pits.

The long-term plan is not yet final, and it's unclear whether the climate-related strategies discussed in the preliminary document will make it into a final cleanup agreement under a new administration.

"I think what's disturbing is that language matters," says Ilan Levin, an attorney with the Environmental Integrity Project in Austin, an environmental watchdog group run in part by former EPA employees. "We're in the early stages, but just seeing that the language has changed in these agreements means that [the current EPA] is not accepting the risks, and they're kind of burying their heads in the sand," he says.

Expediting cleanups

After Harvey struck, Pruitt traveled to Houston and visited the waste pits and other Superfund sites. Pruitt, who has questioned the basic facts of climate change, has said that one of his priorities at the agency is to expedite cleanups at Superfund sites.

"The previous administration not only didn't make this a priority — but took years and years just to make decisions about cleaning up these sites," EPA spokeswoman Liz

Bowman wrote in an email to NPR earlier this week. "The delays that have plagued individual cleanups aren't helping anyone, and proceeding with business as usual is not an option."

She did not comment on the absence of the 2014 climate report from the current EPA website.

Nationwide, some communities near toxic waste sites feel that the cleanup progress has been slow or inadequate, and the Superfund program has been plagued with budget shortfalls for years.

A week after Harvey, Scott Jones of the Galveston Bay Foundation, an environmental advocacy group, told NPR that while he felt the EPA was generally doing a good job developing a cleanup plan for the San Jacinto Waste Pits, he wished the process would move more quickly. His organization has been calling for a cleanup plan for the waste pits for years.

Levin cautions that in many cases, "speeding up these cleanups is not a good idea. I think expediting cleanups will just allow people to take shortcuts."

"The fact is the last administration was proactively considering the additional risks that climate change poses to some of these toxic dump sites," Levin says. "That's a step in the right direction."

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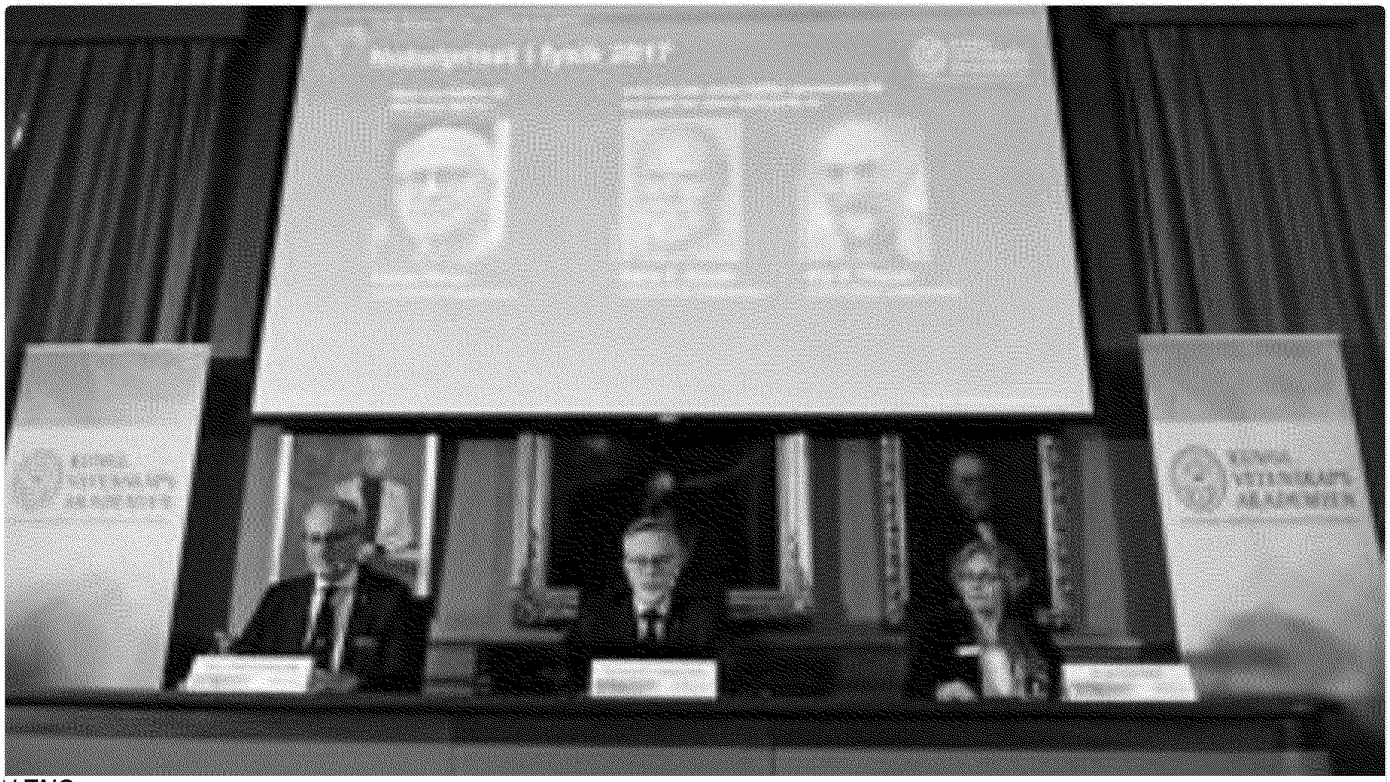

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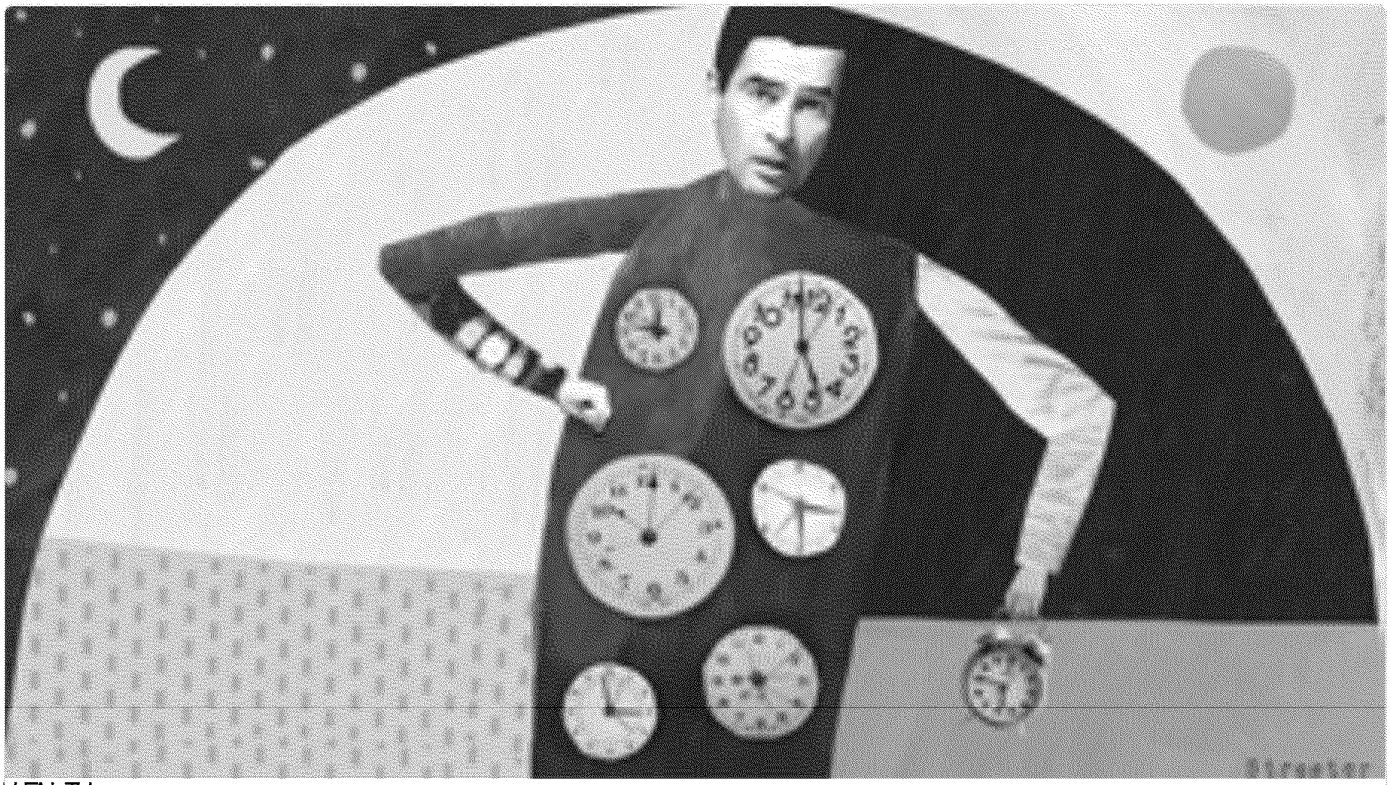

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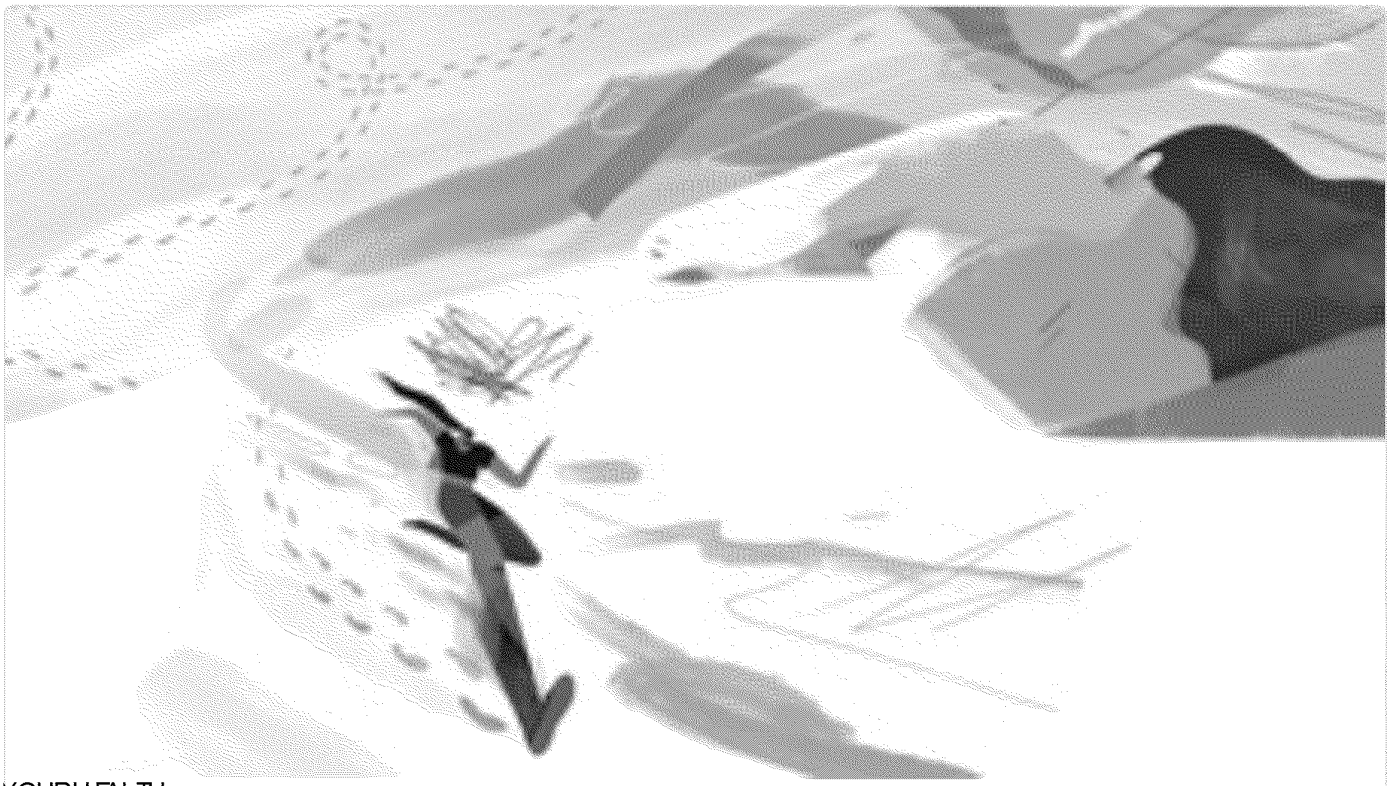

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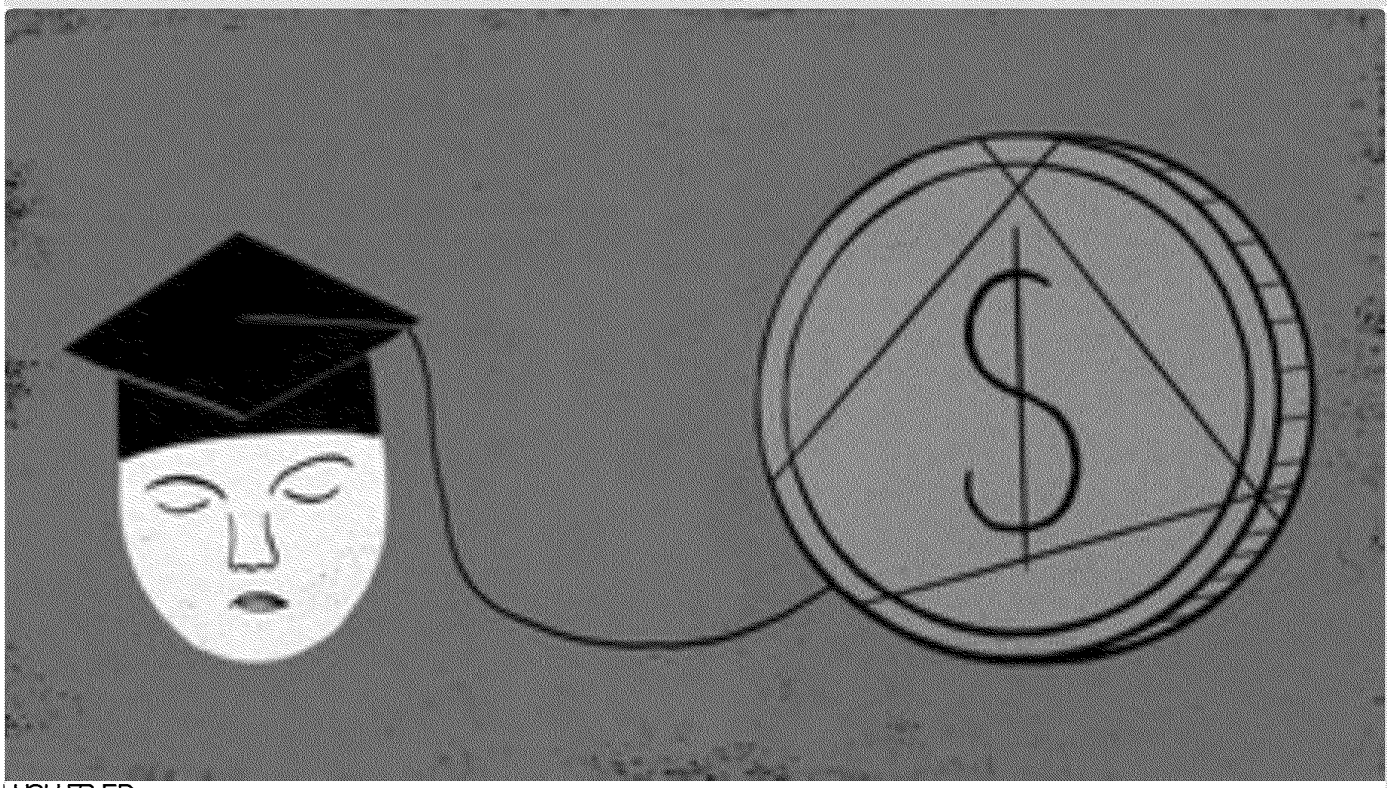

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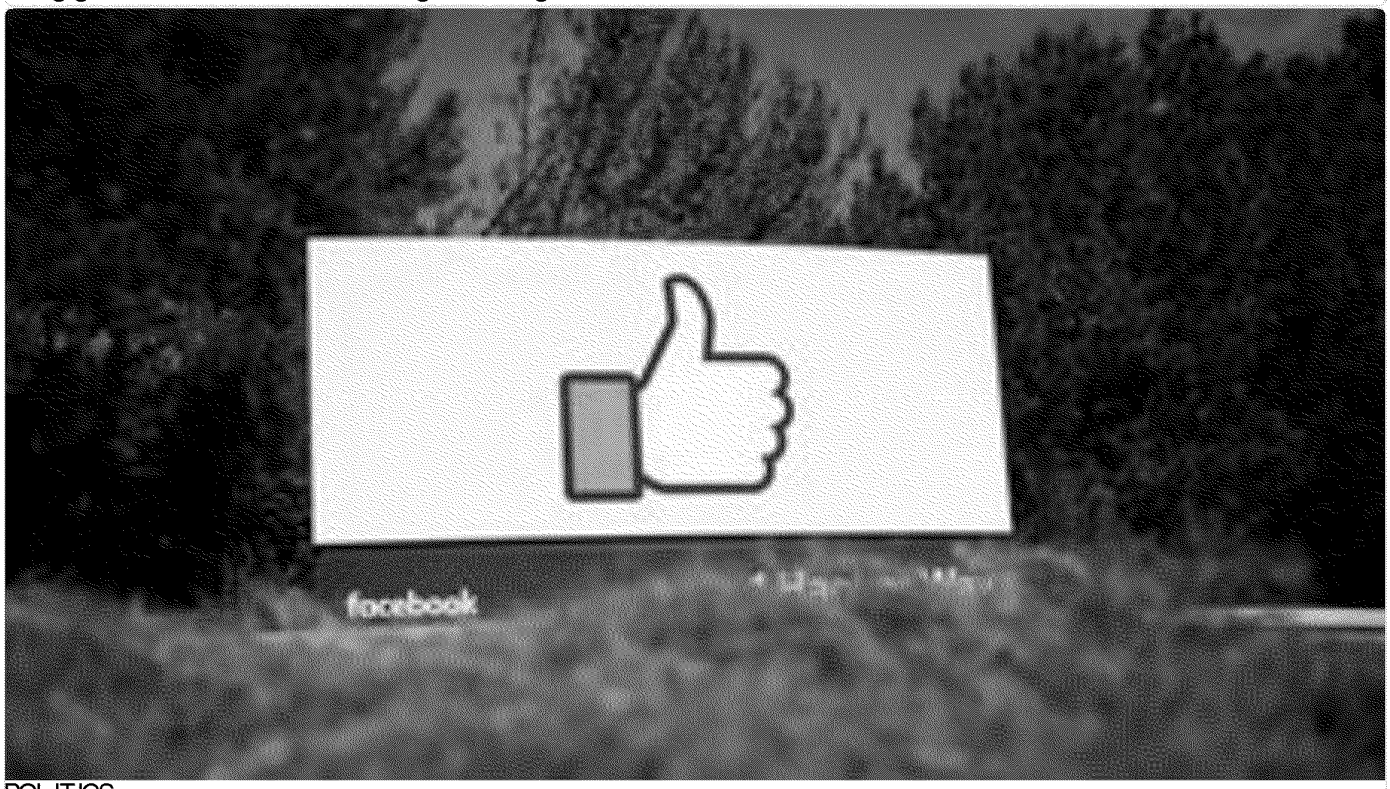

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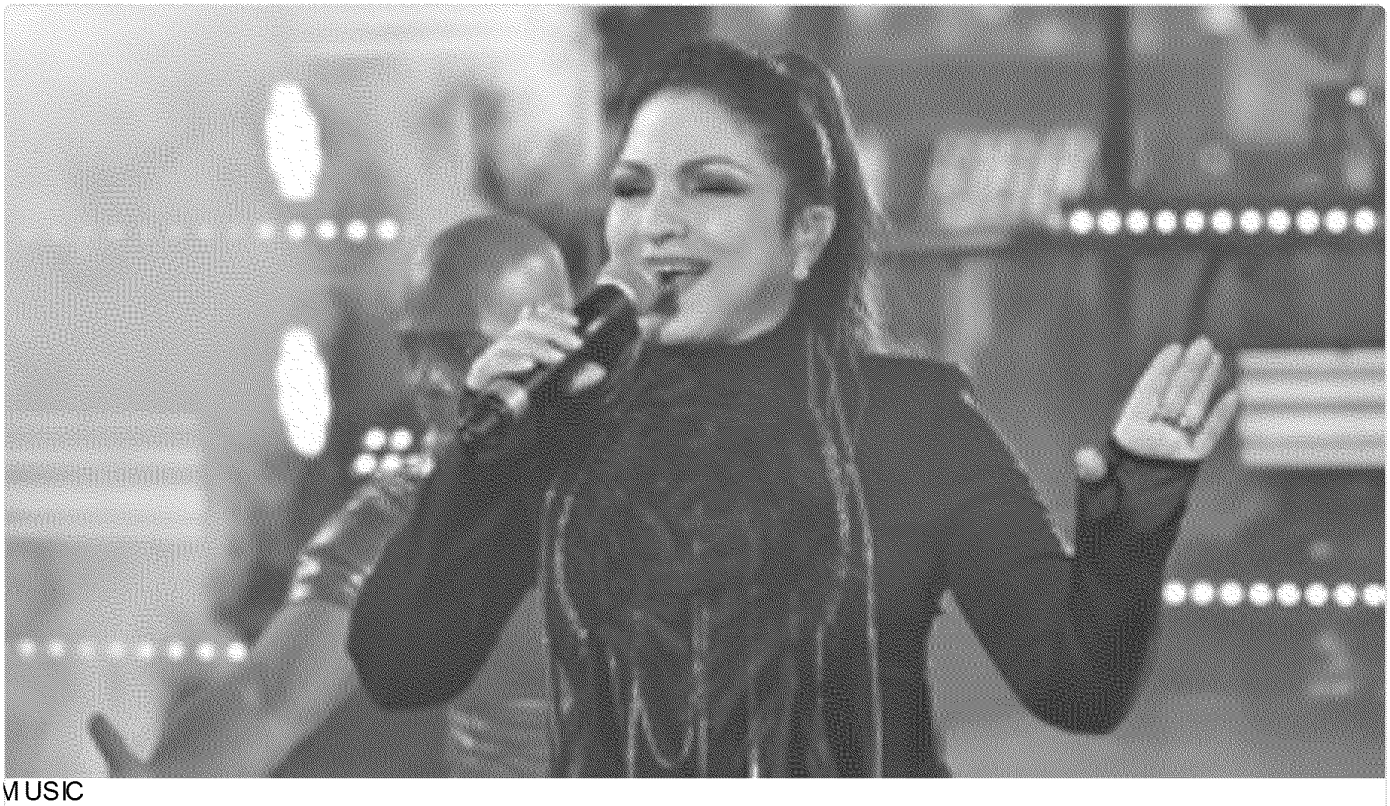

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Harvey knocked out dozens of Texas water, sewer systems

The Associated Press

OCTOBER 02, 2017 5:19 PM

DALLAS — State and federal environmental agencies report Harvey knocked out five drinking-water systems and seven sewage systems in the 58 Texas counties covered by Gov. Greg Abbott's disaster declaration.

In a joint statement issued Monday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality also reported that 38 other drinking-water systems are under boil-water notices.

The TCEQ also reports that four dams failed and 17 others had some type of damage reported, but there were no reports of downstream damage or injuries as a result. None of the inoperable water and sewer systems or damaged dams was specified.

The agencies report that of the 43 Superfund sites in the Harvey-affected areas of Texas and Louisiana, 42 have been cleared and the San Jacinto River Waste Pits require follow-up because a protective cap was damaged and underlying waste material exposed.

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But floodwaters from Harvey completely submerged the pits. The EPA reported last week that a sample collected from the exposed area by an agency dive team showed dioxin levels at 70,000 nanograms per kilograms, more than 2,300 times the level that would prompt a cleanup. The toxic chemicals don't dissolve readily in water and can be spread in contaminated sediment over a large area. The EPA said more testing was needed to determine if contamination had spread from the pits.

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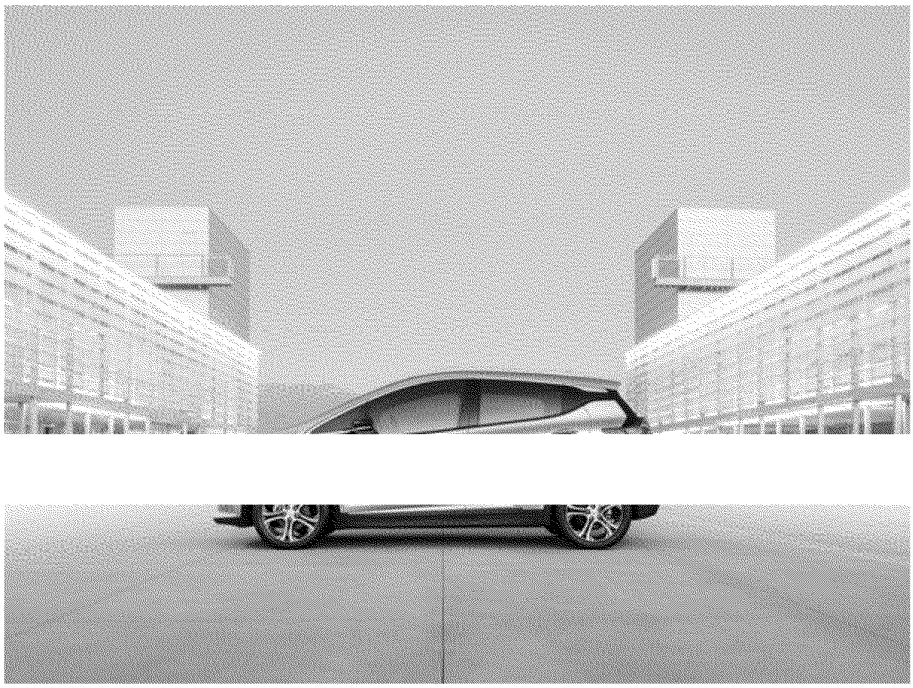

GENERAL MOTORS

AFTER MORE THAN a century peddling vehicles that pollute the atmosphere, General Motors is ending its relationship with gasoline and diesel. This morning, the American automotive giant announced that it is working toward an all-electric, zero-emissions future. That starts with two new, fully electric models next year—then at least 18 more by 2023.

crowd of automakers proclaiming the age of electricity and promising to move away from gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles. In recent months, Volvo, Aston Martin, and Jaguar Land Rover have announced similar moves. GM's declaration, though, is particularly noteworthy because it's among the very largest automakers on the planet. It sold 10 million cars last year, ranging from pickups to SUVs to urban runabouts.

"General Motors believes the future is all-electric," says Mark Reuss, the company's head of product. "We are far along in our plan to lead the way to that future world."

Reuss did not give a date for the death knell of the GM gas- or diesel-powered car, saying the transition will happen at different speeds in different markets and regions. The new all-electric models will be a mix of battery electric cars and fuel cell-powered vehicles.

To be sure, GM's sudden jolt of electricity is planned with its shareholders in mind. The Trump Administration may be moving to roll back fuel efficiency requirements in the US, but the rest of the world is insisting on an electric age. France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Norway have all said they plan to ban the sale of gas and diesel cars in the coming decades. More importantly, China—the world's largest car market—and India, a rising star, plan to join them. No automaker can compete globally without a compelling stable of electric cars.

GM intends to grab as large a slice of the Chinese market as possible. It has previously announced plans to launch 10 electric or hybrid electric cars in the country by 2020. This summer, it started selling a two-seat EV there, for just $5,300. Last year, it sold more cars in China (3.6 million) than it did in the US (3 million).

The crucial question for the American automaker will be how, exactly, to make money from all these cars. By one report, GM loses $9,000 on each Chevy Bolt it sells. Reuss' strategy hinges on bringing costs down thanks to steadily dropping battery prices, more efficient motors, and lighter cars. Massive scale and global supply chains helps, too. "This next generation will be profitable," he says. "End of story."

It's not impossible. "If they've really been laying this groundwork, they could be closer to not just having this tech but having a profitable and high volume way of supplying

General Motors' history hasn't been especially kind to electric mobility. Its invention of the automatic starter helped kill the first wave of electric cars at the start of the 20th century. This is the company that experimented with battery power in the EV-1, only to recall the two-seater from its owners, crush them all, and pile the carcasses up in a junkyard. In the first years of the 21st century, while Toyota was making hybrids popular with the Prius, GM was hawking the Hummer.

Over the past decade, the Detroit giant has positioned itself for a different sort of future. First came the hybrid electric Chevy Volt. Then came GM's great coup, the Chevy Bolt, the 200-mile, $30,000 electric car that hit market long before Tesla's Model 3. GM is seriously pursuing semi-autonomous and fully driverless cars. It offers the first car on US roads with vehicle-to-vehicle communication capability. Now, it talks about its plans to eliminate vehicle pollution, congestion, and traffic deaths.

"GM has the ability to get all of us to that future so much faster," Reuss says. Now it just has to deliver—and make enough money doing it to stick around for that future.

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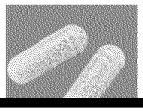

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Tuesday, October 3, 2017 by Jessi Devenyns (https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/author/jessi-devenyns/)

PARKS (HTTPS://WWW.AUSTINMONITOR.COM/STORIES/CATEGORY/RESOURCES/PARKS/)

Austin Energy to turn over Holly Power Plant site by December

The bitter reminder of decades of pollution that the Holly Street Power Plant presents to the residents of the Holly neighborhood will soon disappear.

As of the Parks and Recreation Board meeting on Sept. 26, the plant is in its final phase of decommissioning before the land will be transferred from Austin Energy into the hands of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Nine acres of land will be transferred to Parks and Recreation once the final cleanup is complete. Currently, Austin Energy is removing the remaining concrete and continuing with its soil cleanup to ensure that the eradication of toxins complies with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality criteria. According to Eric Stager, a senior environmental scientist for Austin Energy, “For future Parks land, we are cleaning up to the strictest residential standards.”

Stager explained that the bulk of the soil cleanup includes removing total petroleum hydrocarbons and polychlorinated biphenyls. There were no buried transformers and only trace amounts of lead to contend with. “We had a little lead in the soil, but not as extensive as I expected,” he said.

Parks and Recreation will receive a letter from TCEQ to certify compliance once the cleanup has been completed.

In tandem with the soil remediation, Austin Energy is also backfilling some holes left by the removal of Holly Street Power Plant equipment and completing the final landscaping on the land Austin Energy will retain.

Stager said that all three projects are slated to be completed by the end of October and that the final grading and landscaping will be finished by November. “Hopefully by December we’re wrapping up and ready to turn over to PARD,” he said.

Once Austin Energy is comfortable with the status of the cleanup, it will grant increased access to the area to Parks and Recreation for planning purposes.

Part of Parks and Recreation’s planning includes landscaping a public trail, proposing a boathouse at the Camacho Activity Center, revitalizing Martin Pool, and identifying areas for art and the corresponding artists.

There are talks of Austin Parks Foundation and the Trail Foundation donating trees to help heal the scarred landscape although there are currently no written agreements.

The proposed trail will have a connection to the East Link trail and “the first phase is to put in the major trail that will function as pedestrian and bike activity,” said Reynaldo Hernandez, landscape architect for Parks and Recreation. The new portion of the trail will have two points of connection for the public. One will be on Holly Street and the other will be on Riverside Drive by the baseball fields.

Additionally, Austin Energy is providing $450,000 of funding for a wall to separate the public park and trail from its facilities. “This security wall,” said Hernandez, “that separates the park from Austin Energy was designed to accept art on it.” A portion of the art will be done by artists from the community organization Arte Texas in conjunction with Art in Public Places.

“This is absolutely important to the Mexican-American community so I’m going to have some major problems if all of the sudden we find that the art … is not representative of the community,” said Vice Chair Richard DePalma.

According to Board Member Michael Casias, $50,000 of the $150,000 budgeted for local art has already been designated for Arte Texas. The remaining $100,000 has not yet been allotted. He said that he hopes that art commissioned through public-private partnerships can turn the old power plant into a community gathering space. “There’s incredible opportunity there,” he said. “It’s more than just dead grass.”

There is a community meeting set to show the new schematics to the public on Sept. 30. The trail is expected to be completed in late 2019 or early 2020.

Photo of the Holly Street Power Plant courtesy of Austin Energy.

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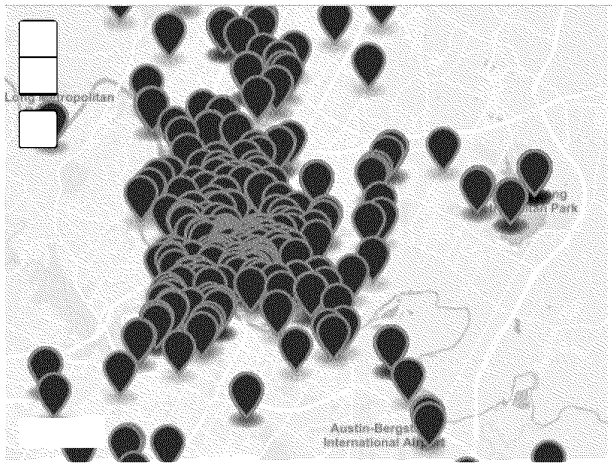

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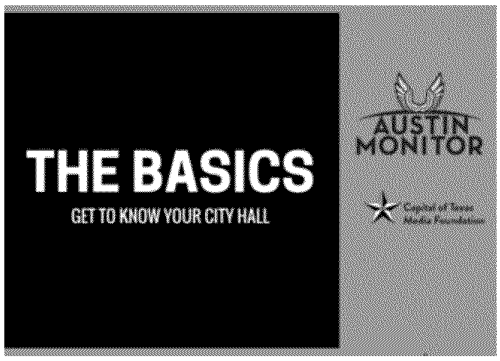

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Oil producers concerned about permit backlog

By Susan Montoya Bryan | The Associated Press 15 hrs ago

ALBUQUERQUE — The cost of drilling for oil and natural gas on public and tribal land went up slightly nationwide, thanks to a fee hike that took effect over the weekend. But New Mexico producers said Monday they are more worried about a continued backlog in the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's processing of permits.

The delays are costing New Mexico and the federal government taxes and royalties, according to the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association.

The industry group estimates nearly $1.5 million in federal royalties and another $831,000 in state severance taxes are deferred daily due to administrative issues. The funding is critical as state lawmakers discuss budget priorities for the coming fiscal year, the association said.

The Bureau of Land Management earlier this year began shifting resources to tackle the backlog in areas where drilling activity has picked up, including in New Mexico's share of the Permian Basin, which also spans parts of West Texas and is one of the nation's top oil producing regions.

Robert McEntyre, a spokesman for the association, said the processing of applications hasn't changed pace significantly since the summer when Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke issued an order targeting the backlog.

While the U.S. Interior Department has prioritized the problem, the delays still concern producers, McEntyre said.

"Really, it's troubling when basically bureaucracy is holding up people from just doing business," he said. "We think it can be a win-win. If we speed up the process, we can see more revenue for New Mexico."

Regional officials with the Bureau of Land Management did not immediately respond to questions regarding the status of New Mexico's backlog.

While federal statute requires the agency to review an application within 30 days, the average processing time nationwide was closer to 257 days during the 2016 fiscal year. Federal statistics showed nearly 20 percent of the 2,802 applications pending at the start of 2017 were in New Mexico.

In northwestern New Mexico's San Juan Basin, industry officials reported that some producers were waiting up to 500 days.

"These kinds of delays push investment away from federal land," McEntyre said.

The Bureau of Land Management is revamping the resource management plan for the basin as environmental groups and Native American tribal leaders push for more protections for culturally significant sites beyond the boundaries of Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

As for the fee, the agency announced a congressionally mandated hike in the amount paid by producers to process drilling applications. Starting Oct. 1, the non-refundable fee increased by $180 to $9,790 due to inflation.

Some industry experts described the increase as modest, suggesting it won't slow the upward trajectory projected for oil production in 2018.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, total crude oil production is forecast to average 9.9 million barrels per day next year. The record of 9.6 million barrels per day was set in 1970. Experts say most of that growth is expected to come from the Permian Basin in Texas and the Gulf of Mexico.

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October 3, 2017, 9:56 am

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Llano County commissioners weigh in on proposed Burnet County rock crusher

Posted on 02 October 2017. Tags: Burnet County news, environment, llano county news, rock crusher

5

STAFF WRITER CONNIE SWINNEY

A proposed rock crusher operation was the site of a protest Sept. 30 at the intersection of U.S. 281 and CR 403. Staff photo by Daniel Clifton

HORSESHOE BAY — Llano County commissioners sidestepped sending a resolution in opposition to a proposed rock crushing operation and opted instead to send individual letters to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which is considering

Asphalt Inc.'s air quality permit.

The resolution offered by Llano County Pct. 1 Commissioner Peter Jones on Sept. 25 outlined the potential impact on Llano County residents, even though the proposed plant would be located in neighboring Burnet County.

In particular, the most populated area of Jones's precinct borders the site of the planned operation, which is adjacent to Baylor Scott & White Medical Center-Marble Falls on Texas 71.

"It's a health and safety concern because we have a lot of Llano County folks who utilize that facility," Jones said.

The resolution failed by a 3-2 vote. Those voting for it were Jones and Llano County Judge Mary Cunningham.

Commissioners who voted against it — Linda Raschke, Mike Sandoval, and Jerry Don Moss — cited the operation being an out-of-county issue.

"It's a regional issue, not (just) a local county issue," Jones said. "We're looking at air quality, so that affects us all."

Jones added that Llano County Emergency Service District No. 1, which serves the Horseshoe Bay, Sandy Harbor, and Blue Lake area, reported that 70 percent of its patients are transported to the Marble Falls medical center.

Some commissioners have offered to write individual letters to either TCEQ or state officials about their concerns.

"I'm glad there is some level of support for the opposition of this plant," Jones said.

connie@thepicayune.com

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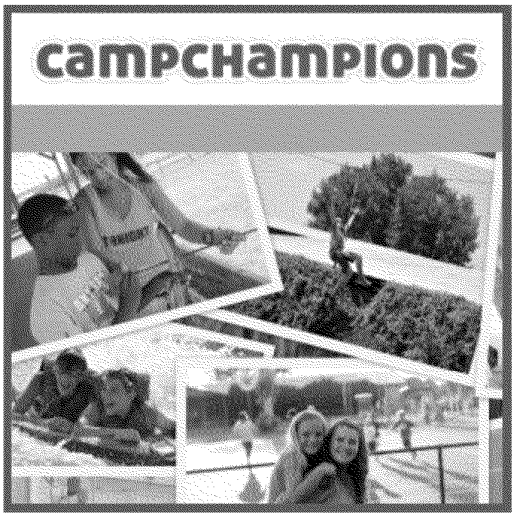

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ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Government Report Says FEMA Flood Mapping Program Needs Improvement

The internal audit found that as of late 2016, only 42% of FEMA's flood maps were up to date.

TRAVIS BUBENIK | OCTOBER 2, 2017, 4:00 PM

A new government report says FEMA's flood mapping program is outdated and mismanaged.

The report from Homeland Security's Inspector General's Office says that more than half of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's maps aren't accurate, and the problem won't be fixed without some changes. Specifically, the audit found that as of late 2016, only 42% of flood maps were up to date.

The report says the agency has had problems finishing map projects. Some have been on hold for more than two years.

The audit recommends FEMA make a number of management and oversight changes, some related to tracking spending and working with partners. Otherwise, the report says, FEMA won't hit its goal of updating at least 80% of the maps.

The agency agrees with the recommendations, saying they are looking for better ways to get through the backlog.

"We are working through them, but it's going to take a little bit of time," said Larry Voice, a FEMA engineer. He didn't read the report, but this process can take a while, particularly in booming suburban areas.

"Things are changing quickly, maybe there's a lot of growth going on, so there are also some areas where we have big priorities where we have valid [mapped] miles already, but we're worried things have changed and they need to be updated," he said.

FEMA has prioritized new studies of flood risk in coastal areas. Voice is currently working in Harvey-effected areas, looking at what the so unprecedented flooding might mean for the studies.

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Travis Bubenik

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

Travis Bubenik reports on the tangled intersections of energy and the environment in Houston and across Texas. A H native and proud Longhorn, he returned to the Bayou City after serving as the Morning Edition Host & Reporter for Ma Public Radio in Far West Texas. Bubenik was previously the...

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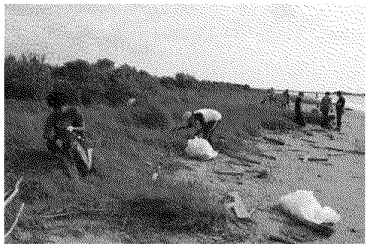

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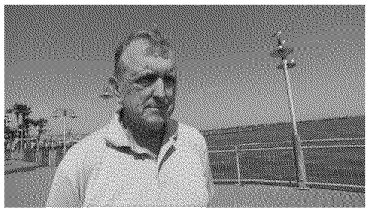

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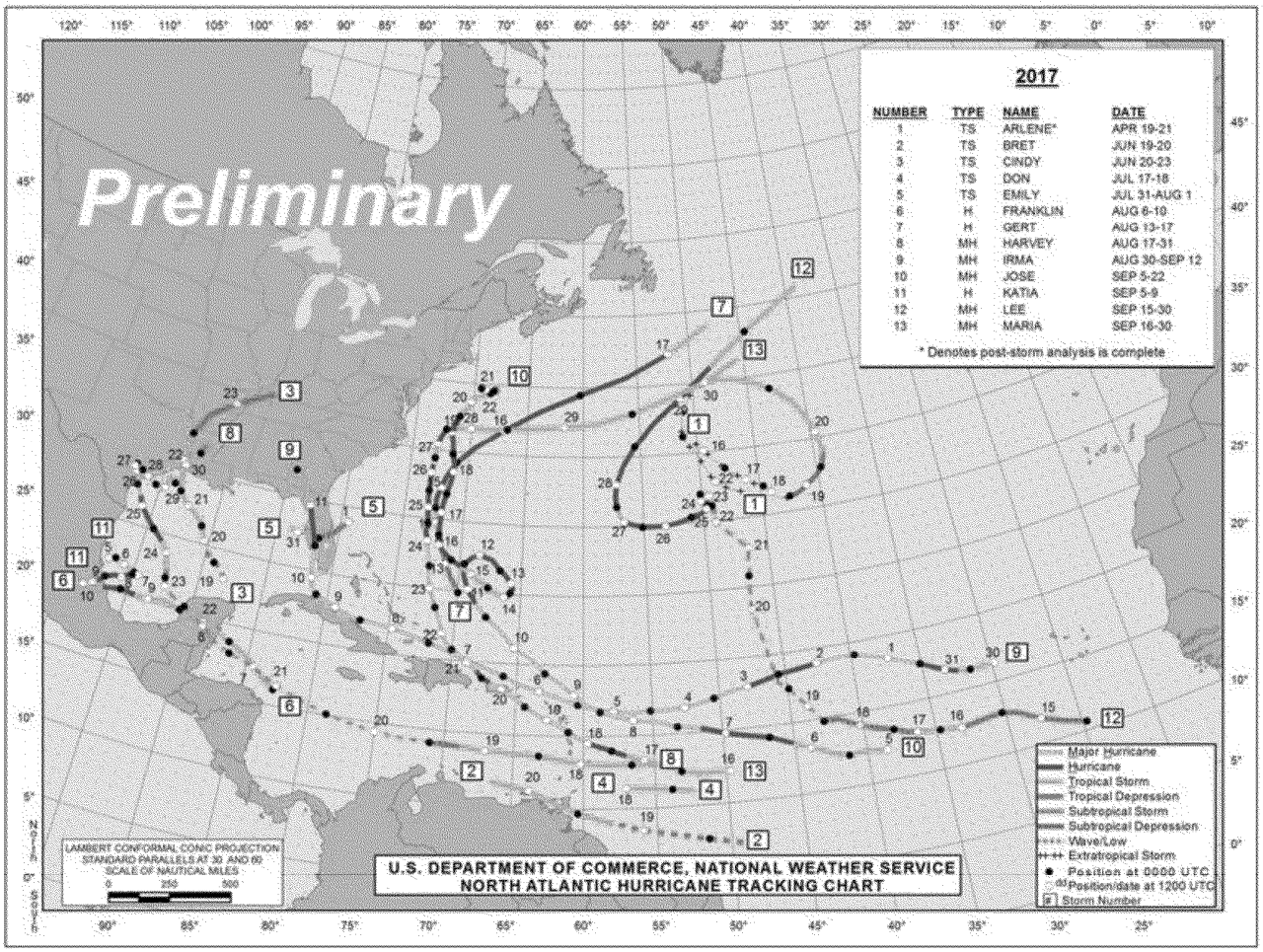
This Year's Atlantic Hurricane Season Is Third Worst on Record

By Stephen Cunningham
October 2, 2017, 11:02 AM CDT

This year's Atlantic hurricane season has been the third-most active on record, and there are still more than eight weeks to go.

The basin produced more tropical cyclones <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/text/MIATWSAT.shtml> at this point in the season, which ends on Nov. 30, only in 1933 and 2004, according to the National Hurricane Center. Meanwhile, September set a record for Accumulated Cyclone Energy, a measure that combines the intensity and duration of storms. Four tropical cyclones formed in September, all of which became hurricanes, with three growing into major hurricanes. That doesn't even include hurricane Irma and Harvey, which formed in August.



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POLITICS

E.P.A. Chief's Calendar: A Stream of Industry Meetings and Trips Home

By ERIC LIPTON and LISA FRIEDMAN OCT. 3, 2017

WASHINGTON — For lunch on April 26, Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, dined with top executives from Southern Company, one of the nation's largest coal-burning electric utilities, at Equinox, a white-tablecloth favorite of Washington power brokers.

That evening, it was on to BLT Prime, a steakhouse inside the Trump International Hotel in Washington, for a meal with the board of directors of Alliance Resource Partners, a coal-mining giant whose chief executive donated nearly $2 million to help elect President Trump.

Before those two agenda items, Mr. Pruitt met privately with top executives and lobbyists from General Motors to talk about their request to block an Obama administration move to curb emissions that contribute to climate change.

It was just a typical day for Mr. Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general. Since taking office in February, Mr. Trump's E.P.A. chief has held back-to-back meetings, briefing sessions and speaking engagements almost daily with top

9
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from February through May, the most detailed look yet at what Mr. Pruitt has been up to since he took over the agency.

Many of those players have high-profile matters pending before the agency, with potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in regulatory costs at stake. Some of these same companies and trade associations were allies of Mr. Pruitt when, as Oklahoma's attorney general, he sued the E.P.A. at least 14 times to try to block rules Mr. Pruitt is now in charge of enforcing.

He also took several trips home to Oklahoma for long weekends, often with one or two brief work meetings, followed by long stretches of downtime.

E.P.A. officials defended Mr. Pruitt's industry-heavy appointment book.

"As E.P.A. has been the poster child for regulatory overreach, the agency is now meeting with those ignored by the Obama administration," an emailed statement from the agency said, adding that the agency believed that The New York Times was making an "attempt to sensationalize for clicks" the administrator's detailed calendar.

But William K. Reilly, the E.P.A. administrator under the first President George Bush, described the level of meetings between Mr. Pruitt and industry executives as unusual.

"My sense is there is almost nothing about this administration that is traditional," Mr. Reilly said. He said Mr. Pruitt's history of suing the E.P.A. should have prompted him to meet regularly with public health advocates and environmentalists.

"I would think he would feel a responsibility to bend over backward to show a sense of judicious impartiality," Mr. Reilly said.

In just the first 15 days of May, Mr. Pruitt met with the chief executive of the Chemours Company, a leading chemical maker, as well as three chemical lobbying groups; the egg producers lobby; the president of Shell Oil Company; the chief executive of Southern Company; lobbyists for the farm bureau, the toy association and a cement association; the president of a truck equipment manufacturer

seeking to roll back emissions regulations for trucks; and the president of the Independent Petroleum Association of America.

The E.P.A. leader also scheduled a call with the Family Research Council, whose self-described mission is to "advance faith, family and freedom in public policy and the culture from a Christian worldview." The topic: pulling "together a small group of key business leaders around the country who are very excited about Administrator Pruitt's new leadership role."

In recent weeks, Freedom of Information Act requests from environmentalists, other nonprofit groups and news organizations including The Washington Post have dislodged documents that hint at Mr. Pruitt's typical day. But for the first time, the most recent release, based on an open records request by the liberal nonprofit American Oversight, includes a description of the topics discussed at each of the meetings, and a list of all the agency officials and corporate executives scheduled to attend.

Mr. Pruitt also has made frequent, government-funded trips to his home state of Oklahoma, even when the journeys included only a bit of official business. A trip to Oklahoma on May 5, which cost $1,043, was justified by the E.P.A. as an "informational meeting." It consisted of a one-hour sit-down that Friday with Sam Wade, the chief executive of the National Rural Water Association, then a return flight to Washington the following Monday.

Mr. Pruitt flew to Oklahoma on May 19, a Friday, toured a chemical company for three hours the next day, then returned to Washington on Monday. The flight for that trip cost $2,122. These trips are being examined by the agency's inspector general. In later trips Mr. Pruitt appears to have scheduled a greater number of meetings around trips to Oklahoma, such as a three-day trip in July during which he toured a Phillips 66 energy plant, spoke to the Chamber of Commerce in Tulsa, held a round table on the rollback of a Clean Water Act regulation and met with Gov. Mary Fallin.

Mr. Pruitt generally takes commercial flights when he travels, records show, but on at least one occasion he flew on a much more expensive charter flight, and

on two other occasions, on federal government and military planes, after getting authorization from agency officials.

But many of Mr. Pruitt's trips outside Washington, the records show, also involved speeches to industry groups and conservative activists who worked closely with the energy industry to challenge the Obama administration's regulatory agenda.

Destinations included the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in Naples, Fla., in late April, where Mr. Pruitt spoke to the National Mining Association; the Phoenician, a golf resort and spa in Scottsdale, Ariz., where he spoke to the National Association of Manufacturers; and the Broadmoor, a Colorado Springs hotel, for a gathering of conservative activists, sponsored by the Heritage Foundation, where the agenda included sessions like "Innovative Ways to Roll Back the Administrative State."

The Times also examined more than a year's worth of calendar records maintained for Gina McCarthy, Mr. Pruitt's predecessor under President Barack Obama, which also demonstrated a partisan bent. Ms. McCarthy held a disproportionate number of meetings with Democratic lawmakers and environmental groups, particularly in the summer of 2014, when the administration was making the case for sweeping climate-change regulations.

But the documents show Ms. McCarthy apparently spent much more time meeting with E.P.A. professional staff and other federal government officials than Mr. Pruitt, discussing agency programs and policies. She also met with industry players, like the American Gas Association, the National Pork Producers Council and Edison Electric Institute, the utility lobby.

One of Mr. Pruitt's first scheduled meetings with a public health advocacy group, according to the calendar, came on May 24 when he sat down with the American Academy of Pediatrics. A day later he had two meetings with environmental activists, including a group called Trout Unlimited, a conservation group. Liz Bowman, a spokeswoman for the E.P.A., said the agency (she would not specify who) had met with more than two dozen other health and environmental groups, including the Audubon Society and the American Lung Association.

The newly released documents, for the first time, create a direct link between Mr. Pruitt's meetings and actions that the industry wants him to take.

The oil and gas industry, for example, opposed an Obama-era rule that required it to collect information on the emission of methane, a gas that is considered at least 25 times as effective at warming the planet as carbon dioxide.

On March 27, A.J. Ferate, the vice president of regulatory affairs at the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association, saw Mr. Pruitt for half an hour in the administrator's office to offer, according to the schedule notes, "just a few words of appreciation for canceling the Information Collection Request (ICR) on the oil and gas industry." Mr. Ferate and Mr. Pruitt had been working together since at least 2011 — when Mr. Pruitt was Oklahoma's attorney general — to try to kill the methane rule.

The calendars show how companies often turn to people with close personal ties to Mr. Trump or Mr. Pruitt to set up meetings. Roy W. Bailey, the Texas co-finance chairman for the Trump campaign, helped organize a meeting for Intrexon, a Maryland company that wants E.P.A. approval for a biotech-based mosquito control system. Jessica M. Garrison, a former consultant to the Republican Attorneys General Association, helped set up the lunch that Mr. Pruitt had at Equinox with electric utility executives.

The schedule also includes a number of meetings with automakers who pressed the Trump administration to roll back Mr. Obama's decision to lock in vehicle emissions rules through 2025. Mr. Pruitt met in his office on March 17 with the chairman of BMW, Harald Krüger. On April 27, Mr. Pruitt met with G.M. a second time, along with nine other automakers represented by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers. The topic: "key E.P.A. priorities affecting the auto industry."

Mr. Pruitt in late April welcomed five executives from a trade association representing sorghum cereal grain growers, including their lobbyist, Joe Bischoff, a former official at the Department of Agriculture. The message they offered Mr. Pruitt: The industry had "witnessed significant pesticide-related restrictions and the threat of revocation of more than half of the crop's reliable insecticides."

Representatives from CropLife America, a trade association run by giant pesticide companies such as Dow AgroSciences and Bayer CropScience, separately met with Mr. Pruitt to "acknowledge the many actions taken already to correct recent regulatory overreach." The meeting with CropLife came the day after Mr. Pruitt overruled E.P.A. scientists who had recommended that the agency ban a pesticide named chlorpyrifos, which has been blamed, in E.P.A.-funded research, for causing developmental disabilities in children, particularly among the families of farm workers.

Another theme emerges in the calendar: Industry executives and conservative activists often scored meetings to press Mr. Pruitt to kill or modify Obama-era climate change regulations, particularly the so-called Clean Power Plan. A May 18 conference call included representatives from the State Policy Network and American Legislative Exchange Council, an organization with ties to Charles G. and David H. Koch, the billionaire industrialists.

"Many people on this call were leading the Clean Power Plan pushback in their state and are advocates for devolving decision making to the local level," the calendar notes.

The E.P.A. is expected to issue a legal justification and plan for rescinding the Clean Power Plan as soon as this week.

A version of this article appears in print on October 3, 2017, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: On Busy Calendar, E.P.A. Chief Puts Interests of Industries First.

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To: Franklin, Kathy[Franklin.Kathy@epa.gov]
Cc: Thompson, Steve[thompson.steve@epa.gov]; Tates, Samuel[Tates.Samuel@epa.gov]; Smith, Monica[smith.monica@epa.gov]; Stucky, Marie[Stucky.Marie@epa.gov]; Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]; Gioffre, Patricia[Gioffre.Patricia@epa.gov]
From: Belke, Jim
Sent: Fri 9/8/2017 3:19:40 PM
Subject: Re: Senate EPW committee inquiry regarding Arkema facilities RMP inspections/violations

Yes it is a high risk facility due to their WCS population.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 8, 2017, at 10:08 AM, Franklin, Kathy <Franklin.Kathy@epa.gov> wrote:

Thanks. Jim Belke is out of the office today, but did acknowledge receipt of the message. We have a question from our management: Was the Arkema Crosby facility a "high risk" RMP facility? High risk according to inspection criteria?

Kathy Franklin

USEPA, Office of Emergency Management

WJ Clinton North Bldg., Rm. 6450G Mailcode 5104A

1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460 (Zip 20004 for private courier delivery)

Phone: 202-564-7987

Email: franklin.kathy@epa.gov

From: Thompson, Steve
Sent: Thursday, September 07, 2017 11:11 PM
To: Franklin, Kathy <Franklin.Kathy@epa.gov>
Cc: Belke, Jim <Belke.Jim@epa.gov>; Tates, Samuel <Tates.Samuel@epa.gov>; Smith, Monica <smith.monica@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>; Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Senate EPW committee inquiry regarding Arkema facilities RMP inspections/violations

Sorry for the delay and the different fonts (can't seem to fix on my IPhone!). I underlined our responses to the questions to help identify them clearly.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Steve

Update as of 9/7/17:

1) In what year was the Arkema facility in Crosby, TX last inspected under the Risk Management Plan program? Please provide documentation of any adverse findings

associated with that inspection.

We have not conducted an RMP inspection at the Arkema - Crosby facility based on available records back to 2003. The inspection targeting criteria that we use for high risk facilities are where offsite consequences impact a large number of people or they have had an accident

-

2) In what year was every other Arkema facility in the U.S. that is subject to the Risk Management Plan program last inspected? Please provide documentation of any adverse

findings associated with all such inspections.

We have no records of any RMP inspections for the Arkema facilities in Hahnville, Beaumont, and Houston.

We show that the Odor-Tech LLC facility was inspected on 3/7/2013. The

inspection did not identify any areas of concern.

We understand from Region 6 that no recent EPA RMP enforcement actions have been taken against the Crosby TX facility, based on ECHO database. Region 6: Does that database cover only the last 5 years and were there any RMP inspections older than 5 years? We also understand that the Arkema Crosby site was on the RMP joint EPA/TCEQ inspection schedule for October 2017. (This statement is incorrect) The facility that was planned for inspection in October 2017 was the Arkema – Houston facility, NOT the Crosby facility. NOTE: Texas/TCEQ is not delegated the RMP regulations. EPA Region 6 notifies the state of ANY inspections conducted in that state (including non-delegated program inspections), and TCEQ would have been invited to attend/observe once a tentative date was selected.

As stated above, we do not have records of any inspections or enforcement actions specific to the Arkema Crosby facility.

From: Franklin, Kathy
Sent: Tuesday, September 05, 2017 1:13 PM
To: O'Donnell, Mary Jane <Odonnell.Maryjane@epa.gov>; Banner, Ellen <Banner.Ellen@epa.gov>; Armstrong, Joan <Armstrong.Joan@epa.gov>; Bookman, Robert <Bookman.Robert@epa.gov>; Hans, Mick <hans.mick@epa.gov>; Tates, Samuel <Tates.Samuel@epa.gov>; Smith, Monica <smith.monica@epa.gov>; Hayes, Scott <Hayes.Scott@epa.gov>; Cobb, David <cobb.david@epa.gov>; Atencio, Kathie <Atencio.Kathie@epa.gov>; Lawrence, Kathryn <Lawrence.Kathryn@epa.gov>; McFadden, Kelly <McFadden.Kelly@epa.gov>
Cc: Wallace, Leonard <Wallace.Len@epa.gov>; Maimone, Francesco <Maimone.Francesco@epa.gov>; Welsh, Mike <Welsh.Mike@epa.gov>; Grant, Deanne <Grant.Deanne@epa.gov>; Chomycia, Greg <chomycia.greg@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>; Rogers, Elizabeth <rogers.elizabeth@epa.gov>; Foster, Althea <Foster.Althea@epa.gov>; Whisnant, Amber <Whisnant.Amber@epa.gov>; Ramirez, Steven A <ramirez.stevena@epa.gov>; jones, bill <jones.bill@epa.gov>; Johnstone, Jeremy <Johnstone.Jeremy@epa.gov>; Morales, Javier <Morales.Javier@epa.gov>; Jennings, Kim <Jennings.Kim@epa.gov>; Gerardin, Margaret <Gerardin.Margaret@epa.gov>; Gioffre, Patricia

<Gioffre.Patricia@epa.gov>; Haas, Craig <Haas.Craig@epa.gov>; Belke, Jim <Belke.Jim@epa.gov>; Principe, Vanessa <Principe.Vanessa@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Senate EPW committee inquiry regarding Arkema facilities RMP inspections/violations

We are now getting a request from our AA's office to have draft responses to Senate inquiry regarding Arkema for their review by Thursday, September 7 . I apologize for asking for speedier answers. If Regions could provide responses on the Arkema facilities inspections/violation by COB Thursday, it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks to those who have already responded.

Kathy Franklin

USEPA, Office of Emergency Management

WJ Clinton North Bldg., Rm. 6450G Mailcode 5104A

1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460 (Zip 20004 for private courier delivery)

Phone: 202-564-7987

Email: franklin.kathy@epa.gov

From: Franklin, Kathy
Sent: Tuesday, September 05, 2017 12:46 PM
To: O'Donnell, Mary Jane <Odonnell.Maryjane@epa.gov>; Banner, Ellen <Banner.Ellen@epa.gov>; Armstrong, Joan <Armstrong.Joan@epa.gov>; Bookman, Robert <Bookman.Robert@epa.gov>; Hans, Mick <hans.mick@epa.gov>; Tates, Samuel <Tates.Samuel@epa.gov>; Smith, Monica <smith.monica@epa.gov>; Hayes, Scott <Hayes.Scott@epa.gov>; Cobb, David <cobb.david@epa.gov>; Atencio, Kathie <Atencio.Kathie@epa.gov>; Lawrence, Kathryn <Lawrence.Kathryn@epa.gov>; McFadden, Kelly <McFadden.Kelly@epa.gov>
Cc: Wallace, Leonard <Wallace.Len@epa.gov>; Maimone, Francesco <Maimone.Francesco@epa.gov>; Welsh, Mike <Welsh.Mike@epa.gov>; Grant, Deanne <Grant.Deanne@epa.gov>; Chomycia, Greg <chomycia.greg@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>; Rogers, Elizabeth <rogers.elizabeth@epa.gov>; Foster, Althea <Foster.Althea@epa.gov>; Whisnant, Amber <Whisnant.Amber@epa.gov>; Ramirez, Steven A <ramirez.stevena@epa.gov>; jones, bill <jones.bill@epa.gov>; Johnstone, Jeremy <Johnstone.Jeremy@epa.gov>; Morales, Javier

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Subject: Senate EPW committee inquiry regarding Arkema facilities RMP inspections/violations

Colleagues:

We have received an inquiry (see attached letter) from the Senator Tom Carper of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works regarding Arkema Crosby TX incidents involving organic peroxides. Two of the questions below ask about RMP inspection/violations of Arkema facilities:

1) In what year was the Arkema facility in Crosby, TX last inspected under the Risk Management Plan program? Please provide documentation of any adverse findings

associated with that inspection.

2) In what year was every other Arkema facility in the U.S. that is subject to the Risk Management Plan program last inspected? Please provide documentation of any adverse

findings associated with all such inspections.

We understand from Region 6 that no recent EPA RMP enforcement actions have been taken against the Crosby TX facility, based on ECHO database. Region 6: Does that database cover only the last 5 years and were there any RMP inspections older than 5 years? We also understand that the Arkema Crosby site was on the RMP joint EPA/TCEQ inspection schedule for October 2017.

We request your assistance with answering these 2 questions by providing information on RMP inspections/violations at all the US Arkema facilities and provide this information to Jim Belke by COB September 12. Arkema lists their US facilities on the following website: http://www.arkema-americas.com/en/arkema-locations-in-the-americas/?country=northamerica/usa/

Please also reply to indicate if you have no responsive records. I am sending this out on behalf of Jim Belke, who is busy with a training class for the next few days. Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Kathy Franklin

USEPA, Office of Emergency Management

WJ Clinton North Bldg., Rm. 6450G Mailcode 5104A

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Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: R6HarveySITL
Sent: Tue 9/5/2017 12:31:04 PM
Subject: M6H1 Harvey Response - 0700 9.5.2017 Update
9-5-17 0700 Update.pdf

See attached.

Hurricane Harvey 2017
9/5/2017 – 0700 CDT Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On September 4, 2017, the President approved the addition of seven more counties (Austin, Bastrop, DeWitt, Gonzales, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee) to the Disaster Declaration. This brings the total number of counties on the Presidential Disaster Declaration to 39.

- The Acting Regional Administrator, the Chairman of TCEQ and Special Advisors to the Administrator will brief Mayor today. EPA Liaison has embedded with Houston Mayor's office. Afterwards, they toured three Superfund sites targeted for inspection and briefed Senator John Cornyn's office.

- EPA Ronnie Crossland, Senior liaison will join TCEQ Chairman Shaw for briefing with Governor Abbott this morning. Acting RA Coleman will join by telephone.

- The Acting Regional Administrator and Special Advisors to the Administrator plan to visit the Houston command post today and the Beaumont command post on Wednesday.

- EPA has demobilized from the Arkema site.

- EPA continues to be embedded with response partners on teams performing Department of Water/ Waste Water (DW/WW) system assessments, hazard evaluations, and container recovery operations.

- EPA continues to conduct ambient air monitoring in Houston, and is evaluating an area of potential concern associated with air pollution from a Valero facility in Houston. EPA's Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) will conduct air monitoring in southeast Houston around the Valero Refinery.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

EPA has deployed a Public Information Officer to the FEMA Joint Field Office in Austin. The PIO will be EPA representative to the federal Joint Information Center (JIC).

The EPA will host a call with key Environmental Justice (EJ) contacts in Texas and Louisiana on September 5, 2017. The purpose of the call is to reach out to EJ contacts to discuss and listen to community environmental concerns in the areas impacted by Hurricane Harvey. EPA is

establishing an EJ Network and will convene weekly calls to keep the Network abreast of EJ related environmental concerns associated with the current emergency situation. EPA has also fielded calls and emails from EJ contacts seeking information on locating and gathering re-entry supplies, instructions on minimizing environmental hazards, disinfecting private wells, shelter in place guidance in Spanish, and elevated benzene levels along with other compounds in ambient air samples in a neighborhood near the intersection of 225 and 610 in Houston. Callers were directed to the appropriate website, local contact, FEMA or the REOC.

Preparations are being made for Community Liaisons to be deployed to the Houston area later this week. The Community Liaisons will be involved in disseminating information on the hazards of flood waters, mold, residential well water testing, and other issues. Their role will take them to the neighborhoods, rural areas and partnering with local businesses and other federal and local agencies.

DEBRIS RECOVERY

EPA currently has no mission assignment for debris recovery operations.

AIR MONITORING

EPA's mobile air monitoring TAGA bus along with EPA personnel will be operational today.

EPA continued to conduct air monitoring near the Valero Refinery in areas north and south of the intersection of 225 and 610 in Houston. Additional sampling locations were added to include a number of schools and parks. EPA contacted the Houston Health Department (HHD) to discuss concerns they received and had regarding elevated benzene and toluene levels detected in the neighborhood next to the Valero refinery. HHD is currently conducting air monitoring from a mobile laboratory as well as with additional ground support. HHD expressed an interest in EPA possibly taking over the air monitoring in the future so they could continue to address the growing number of locations in the Houston area.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Daily/Cumulative Summary of Hazard Evaluations/Recovery				
Status	**Opened**		**Closed**	
	9/4/2017	**Cumulative**	**9/4/2017**	**Cumulative**
Corpus Christi Branch	3	46	8	58
Houston Branch	33	127	5	15
NRC Reports	0	3	0	0
* Note: Open means the target is yet to be recovered. Closed means the target was recovered/left in place or access was denied to collect the item.				

Daily/Cumulative Summary of Spills/Discharges				
Status	**Opened**		**Closed**	
	9/4/2017	**Cumulative**	**9/4/2017**	**Cumulative**
Corpus Christi Branch	12	351	4	32
Houston Branch	7	37	3	6
NRC Reports	6	27	8	15

FIELD RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The table below displays the teams deployed in the Corpus Christi, Houston and Port Arthur Branches during this operational period:

Quantity and Types of Teams Deployed 9/4/2017			
Team Type	**Corpus Christi Branch**	**Houston Branch**	**Port Arthur / Beaumont**
Water Assessment Teams	1	10	0
Hazard Evaluation	1	21	3
Oil Discharge Assessment	2	3	0
Container Recovery	2	0	0
Oil Recovery Group	3	0	0
ER/Recovery Group	3	1	0
Arkema Group	0	1	0
Air Operations Group	0	2	0

CORPUS CHRISTI BRANCH:

- Personnel completed pre-sampling and fencing on the two staging pads. The pads are located in Port Aransas and Aransas Pass.
- In the City of Rockport, a team assessed an elevated tank. City engineers recommended that the city drain the tank and disassemble it due to structural damage.
- In Holiday Beach, a team met with the water system operator and board members to discuss their concerns and issues. The water system operator stated that more parts are needed for repairs of all the distribution, but all current leaks have been fixed.
- TCEQ operations were turned back over to the TCEQ regional office.
- Ten drums, three tanks greater than 55 gallons and 1 cylinder were recovered, closing a total of seven assessments.

	CONTAINERS			**TOTAL**
	Drums [55 gals]	**Large Containers [<55 gals]**	**Large Containers [>55 gals]**	
9/4/2017	10	0	3	13
Total to date	49	32	5	86

HOUSTON BRANCH:

- Hazard Evaluation teams conducted assessments in Lincoln County and Chambers County. 40 sites will need additional response actions. Hazard Evaluation Assessment status: 90% complete in Lincoln County, 30% in Chambers County and 10% in Austin County. All other counties in the Houston Branch are 0% complete.
- Air reconnaissance conducted an aerial overflight of Austin County and Colorado County to assess flooding extent and pollution. Seven sites were identified for ground assessment.

- Discharge Monitoring teams oversaw fuel transfer and ten facility discharge targets were closed out.

- ASPECT conducted flights to Chambers County, Wharton County and Matagorda County. In Chambers County, ASPECT photographed the remaining Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) targets (approximately 15) and then proceeded to RNA sites in Wharton and Matagorda Counties (approximately 110 sites). There were no chemical detections. ASPECT's reach back team is consolidating all positive chemical detections from all flights and preparing tabular and geospatial products for the Region.

PORT ARTHUR/BEAUMONT BRANCH:

- It is anticipated that the Port Arthur/Beaumont Branch should be fully stood up by Wednesday, September 6, 2017.

- A hazard evaluation team assessed the Neches Park, Sabine Pass and Sabine. High water prevents ground operations at this time. A second hazard evaluation team visited Motiva. Motiva has no power and is shut down. The team also contacted and confirmed that the Colonial Pipeline is still non-operational.

- Teams conducted assessments and identified 10 sites for reassessment.

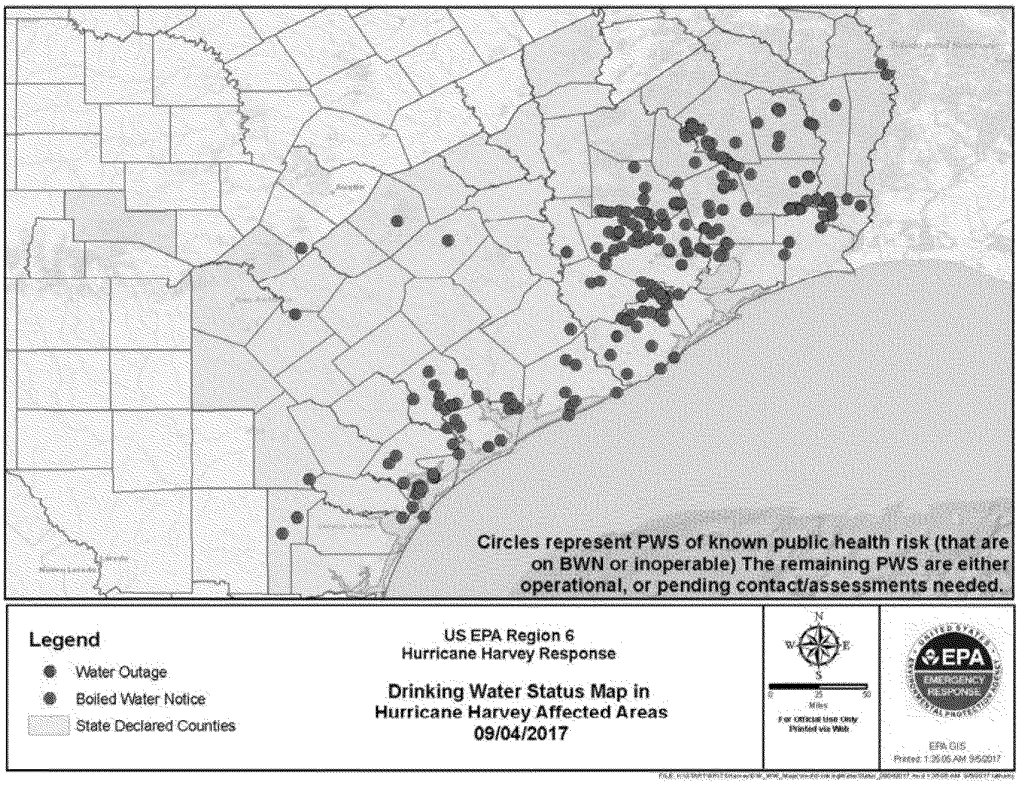
DRINKING WATER / WASTEWATER ASSESSMENTS

EPA is providing support to TCEQ for drinking water (DW) and wastewater (WW) system assessments. There are 10 members at the TCEQ Austin phone bank including one assisting with data flow. In addition, DW and WW assessment teams are currently set up in Houston, with additional members arriving this week. Current response activities consist of six members from EPA Region 6 conducting DW or WW assessments in Houston. Also, two members are providing assistance to the City of Beaumont in coordination with TCEQ, with their home base in Houston. In the next day, there will be seven from EPA Region 7 and one from Region 2 to form additional DW and WW teams for conducting field assessments in the Houston Branch.

Of the approximately 4500 water systems that were initially projected to be impacted by Hurricane Harvey, approximately 3,607 systems were in the affected area (58 State Declared Counties).

Of the systems in the affected areas, 2,175 are public water systems that serve a population of 10,878,982 and 596 are non-transient non-community (NTNC) water systems that serve hospitals, health care facilities, nursing homes and day cares, with a population of 216,871.

As of 1700 September 4, 2017 the EPA and TCEQ have made contact with 2,252 public and NTNC water systems and have confirmed 1,507 are fully operational and servicing water to a population of 9,523,361. As of September 4, 2017, there are 148 systems that have reported being on a boil water notice and 50 have reported a water outage.


Circles represent PWS of known public health risk (that are on BWN or inoperable) The remaining PWS are either operational, or pending contact/assessments needed.
Legend
Water Outage
Boiled Water Notice
State Declared Counties
US EPA Region 6
Hurricane Harvey Response
Drinking Water Status Map in Hurricane Harvey Affected Areas
09/04/2017
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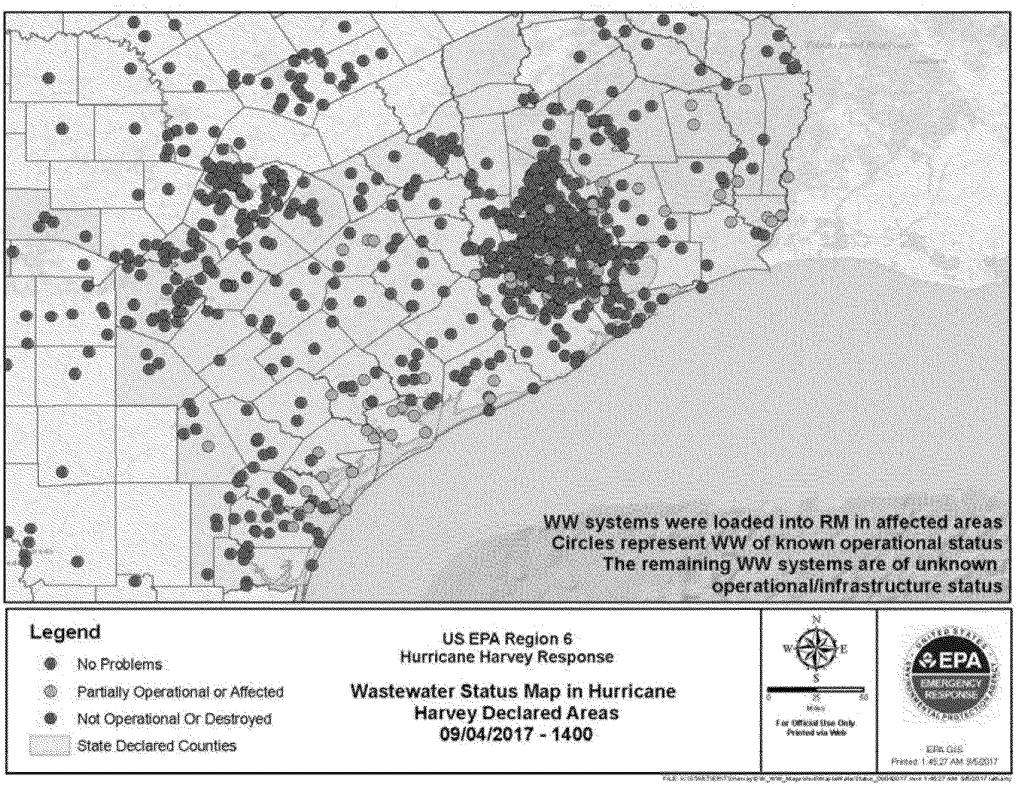
WW systems were loaded into RM in affected areas
Circles represent WW of known operational status
The remaining WW systems are of unknown operational/infrastructure status
Legend
No Problems
Partially Operational or Affected
Not Operational Or Destroyed
State Declared Counties
US EPA Region 6
Hurricane Harvey Response
Wastewater Status Map in Hurricane Harvey Declared Areas
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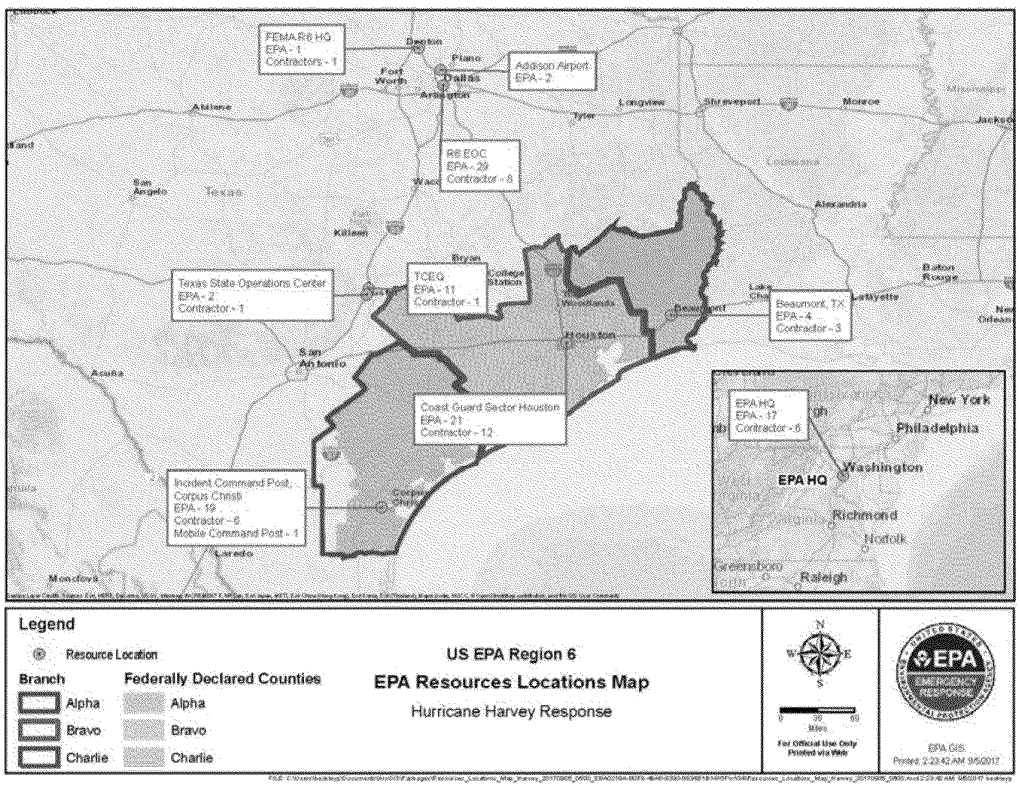
EPA RESOURCES

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	TX SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	Beaumont/ Port Arthur	HQ EOC, Wash, DC	TOTAL
EPA	29	1	2	11	21	19	4	17	104
START	7	1	1	1	12	6	3		31
ERRS					7	8			15
Other Contractors	1							6	7
TOTAL	37	2	3	12	40	33	7	23	157



FUNDING

September 4, 2017

SitRep
September 4, 2017, UPDATED 1300 hours

Funding Sources	Funding Ceiling	Funding Ceiling Less Indirect	Spent to Date	Remaining Balance	Daily Burn Rate	Days Remaining
Non Mission Assignment	N/A		$64,200.00	$0.00		
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-01	$20,000.00	$17,654.00	$13,424.00	$4,230.00	$2,848.00	1.49
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-03	$8,592,000.00	$7,584,077.00	$3,419,017.00	$4,165,060.00	$236,348.84	17.62
Totals:	$8,612,000.00	$7,601,731.00	$3,496,641.00	$4,169,290.00		

** Indirect costs represent the money the Cincinnati Shared Service Center takes off the top to manage the Mission Assignments

*Burn rate does not include daily ERRS amounts, not yet received. The burn does include START & ASPECT.

REFINERIES/FUEL WAIVERS

No New Information.

The Department of Energy authorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to negotiate and execute an emergency exchange agreement with the Phillips 66 Lake Charles Refinery. This decision will authorize 200,000 barrels of sweet crude oil and 300,000 barrels of sour crude oil to be drawn down from SPR's West Hackberry, Louisiana (LA) site and delivered via pipeline to the Phillips 66 Lake Charles refinery.

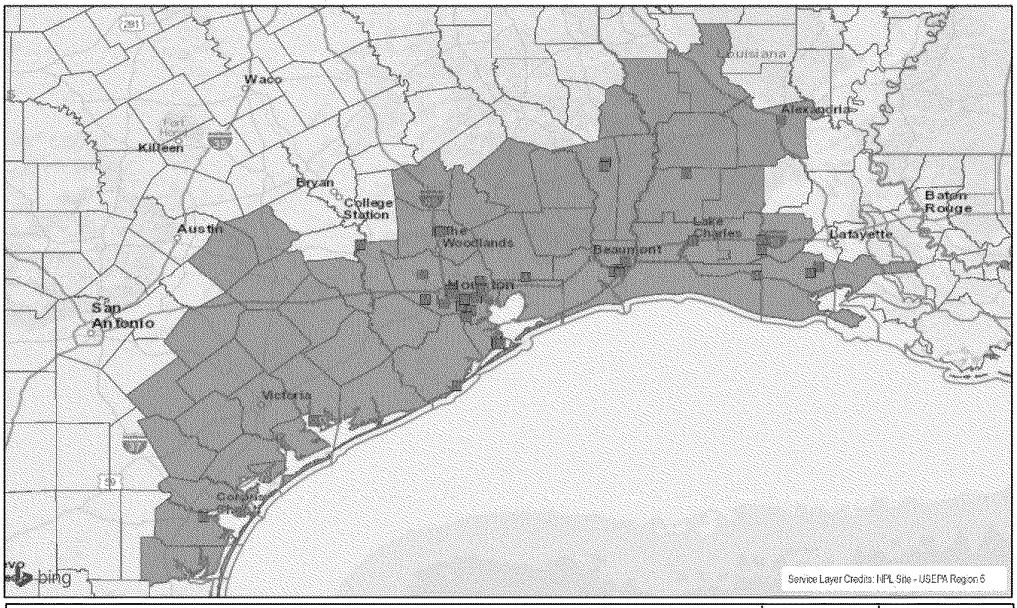
Four No Action Assurance (NAA) letters were signed by EPA on September 1, 2017, and are effective until September 15, 2017. NAAs can help relieve fuel shortages by expediting the distribution of existing supplies in both Texas and Louisiana until impacted refineries can resume normal operations. It is anticipated this will allow for the immediate distribution of 10 million or more gallons of refined product. For each NAA, EPA will exercise discretion not to pursue enforcement for violations of the identified regulations ranging from inadequate vapor recovery and fuel truck documentation to tank refilling procedures at bulk fuel terminals.

SUPERFUND NPL SITES

NPL Site Inspections

- 43 NPL sites are located in the affected area, of these
- 43 NPL sites have had rapid assessments, of these
- 13 NPL sites required follow up inspections
    - 5 site inspections completed before 9/4/2017
    - 6 site inspections completed on 9/4/2017
    - 2 site inspections will be completed on 9/5/2017

As a result of these inspections, two sites (San Jacinto Pits and US Oil Recovery) require added inspection.



Legend

- NPL Sites (43)
- Coast Guard Area of Responsibility
- Federally Declared

US EPA Region 6

National Priority List (NPL) Sites in Federally Declared Counties/Parishes

N W E S

0 25 50 Miles

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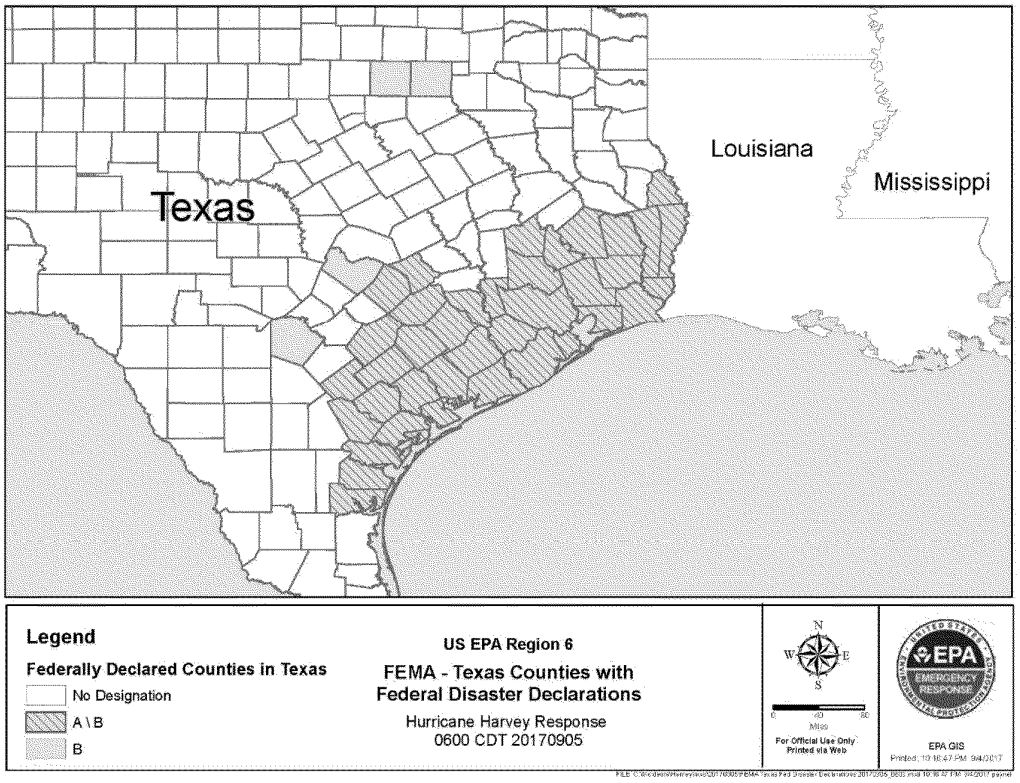
SUPERFUND NPL SITES (Continued)

Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties					9/5/2017
Hurricane Harvey Rapid Response Assessment	Phase 1	Phase 2		Phase 3	All Phases Completed
	Rapid Response Assessment	Site Inspection Needed	Inspected	Additional Response Action	
TEXAS					
SITE NAME					
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	8/29/17	No			8/29/2017
BAILEY WASTE DISPOSAL	9/1/17	Yes			
BRINE SERVICE CO.	8/30/17	Yes	8/30/17	No	8/30/2017
BRIO REFINING INC.	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
CONROE CREOSOTING COMPANY	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	8/30/17	No			8/30/17
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
FALCON REFINERY	8/30/17	Yes	8/30/17	No	8/30/2017
FRENCH, LTD.	9/1/17	Yes	9/4/17	No	9/4/2017
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	9/1/17	Yes	9/3/17	No	9/3/2017
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	9/1/17	Yes	9/3/17	No	9/3/2017
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
HART CREOSOTING	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	9/1/17	Yes	9/4/17	No	9/4/2017
JASPER CREOSOTING	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	8/29/17	No			08/29/17
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	9/1/17	Yes	9/4/17	No	9/4/2017
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
MOTCO, INC.	8/31/17	No			8/31/2017
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	8/29/17	No			08/29/17
PALMER BARGE LINE	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
PATRICK BAYOU	9/1/17	Yes	9/4/17	No	9/4/2017
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	9/1/17	Yes	9/4/17	No	9/4/2017
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	9/1/17	Yes	9/3/17	Yes	
SHERIDAN DISPOSAL	9/3/17	No			9/3/2017
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	8/29/17	No			08/29/17
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	8/29/17	No			08/29/17
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	8/29/17	No			08/29/17
STAR LAKE CANAL	8/30/17	No			8/30/2017
STATE MARINE OF PORT ARTHUR	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
TEX-TIN CORP.	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
TRIANGLE CHEMICAL COMPANY	9/1/17	Yes			
UNITED CREOSOTING CO.	9/1/17	No			9/1/17
US OIL RECOVERY	9/1/17	Yes	9/4/17	Yes	
LOUISIANA					
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	09/01/17	No			9/1/17
D.L. MUD, INC.	08/29/17	No			08/29/17
EVR-WOOD TREATING/EVANGELINE REFINING COMPANY	09/01/17	No			9/1/2017
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	08/29/17	No			08/29/17
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	08/31/17	No			8/31/2017
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	08/29/17	No			08/29/17
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	08/29/17	No			08/29/17
SBA SHIPYARD	09/01/17	No			9/1/17
RUSTON FOUNDRY	09/03/17	No			9/3/17

Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties					9/5/2017
Hurricane Harvey Rapid Response Assessment	Phase 1	Phase 2		Phase 3	All Phases Completed
	Rapid Response Assessment	Site Inspection Needed	Inspected	Additional Response Action	
STATUS SUMMARY					
Rapid Response Assessment Completed	43				
Sites with no further action	39				
Sites in Phase 2	4				

FEMA – TEXAS COUNTIES WITH DISASTER DECLARATIONS



To: Hurricane Harvey Principals[Hurricane_Harvey_Principals@epa.gov]
Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: Buchanan, Kayla
Sent: Thur 8/31/2017 12:36:01 PM
Subject: Hurricane Harvey 08-31-2017 0800 Final Update
8-31-17 0800 Update Final.pdf

Kayla D. Buchanan, BS, MPH

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6

Chemical Accident Enforcement Section

Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division

1445 Ross Avenue (6EN-AS) Dallas, Texas

Office: 214-665-6480 Fax: 214-665-3177

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Tropical Storm Harvey 2017
8/31/2017 – 0800 CDT Update

HIGHLIGHTS

Texas

At approximately 0245 on August 31, 2017 the Arkema facility exploded.

EPA emergency response personnel in Texas are in direct contact with first responders in Harris County and are providing federal assistance and resources. Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is conducting air monitoring in the area. EPA ASPECT aircraft has been deployed to provide real-time chemical information instantaneously to first responders. The aircraft measures for 78 chemical compounds including peroxides and sulfur dioxides. EPA's federal On-scene Coordinator will be on-scene shortly to ensure all federal resources are available to first responders. Under the National Contingency Plan, EPA assumes the lead responsibility for the federal government in assisting the state and local first responders. EPA is also sending additional air monitoring personnel and equipment to augment the current effort of the state and local first responders. Monitoring teams from Houston area will be on-scene in the next few hours.

According to local responders one of the eight refrigerated trailers on site auto-ignited and is burning. Due to health and safety concerns, Harris County Fire Department is maintaining a 1.5-mile evacuation around the facility. On August 30, 2017 at 0900 EPA ASPECT aircraft conducted its initial overflight of the Arkema facility in Crosby, TX. No vapors were detected migrating from the site and no thermal abnormalities were detected on that overflight.

Poison Control Centers are set up in Texas to help citizens who have health concern questions concerning the Arkema facility, as well as any other flood related health questions.

The EPA Administrator will visit the State Operations Center in Austin today August 31, 2017.

There has been an expansion of the Federally Declared counties in Texas. An additional fourteen counties were added today. Three of the fourteen were added for emergency services such as hosting mega shelters.

The Conoco Phillips facility in Cuero, Texas reported a 316 bbl spill oil spill due to Hurricane Harvey. The spill impacted Denton Creek. An emergency response team is responding out of the Corpus Christi Incident Command Post.

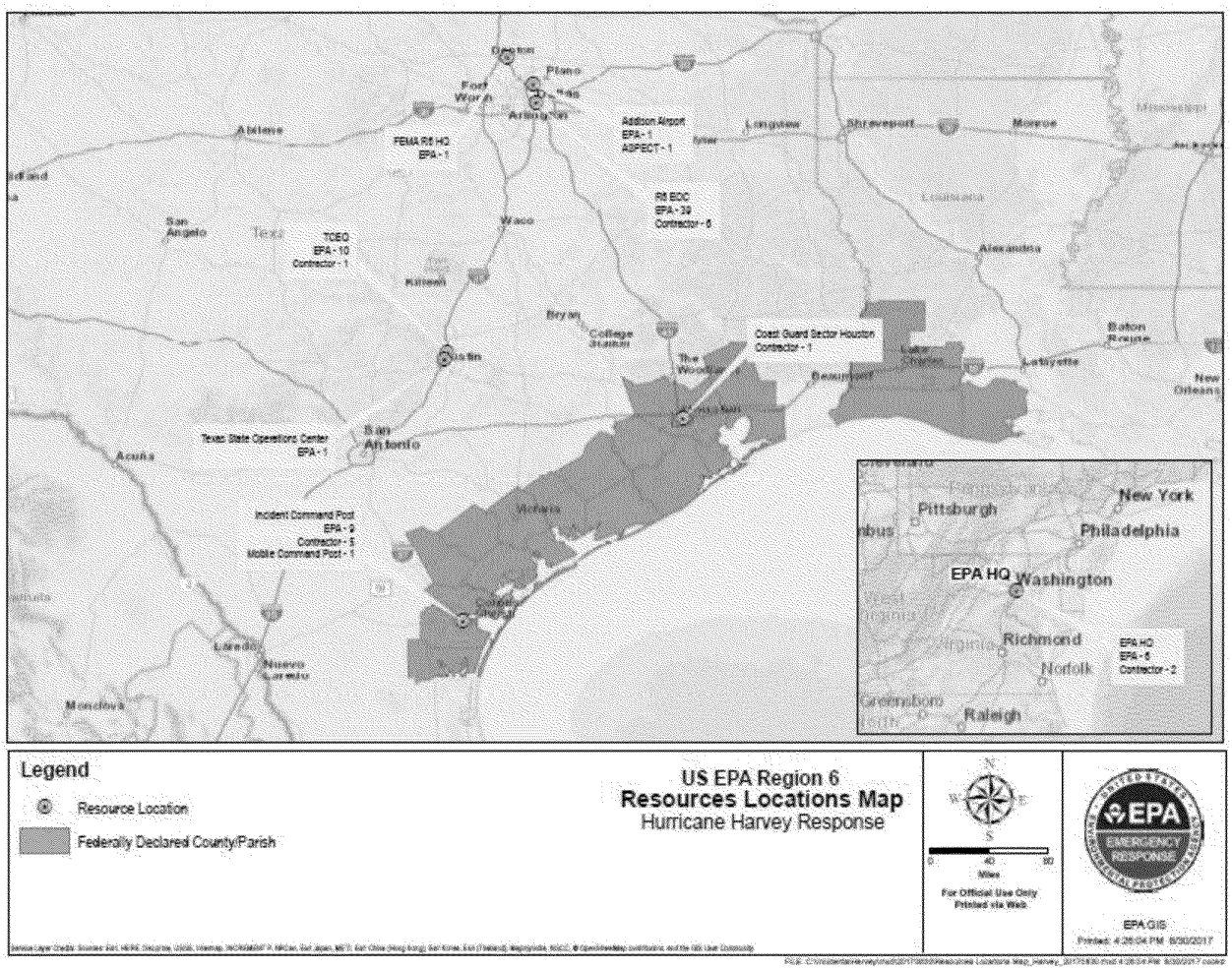
ESF-15 FEMA Public Affairs is establishing a Joint Information Center in Austin at the newly established Joint Field Office (JF0). The EPA Public Information Unit in Dallas is fully operations and supported by a Public Information Assistance Team (PIAT). An EPA PIO is also in Corpus Christi to support operations there.

Louisiana

EPA continues to participate in National Weather Service (NWS) and Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) conference calls. EPA coordinates with LDEQ periodically throughout the day.

Resources

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	Texas SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	HQ EOC Wash DC	Totals
EPA	39	1	1	10		9	6	66
START	5			1	1	5		7
IT Contractor	1						2	3
TOTAL	45	1	1	11	1	14	8	76


Denton
Plano
Fort Worth
Arlington
Abilene
FEMA R6 HQ
EPA - 1
Addison Airport
EPA - 1
ASPECT - 1
Longview
Shreveport
Monroe
R6 EOC
EPA - 39
Contractor - 6
San Angelo
Texas
TCEQ
EPA - 10
Contractor - 1
Waco
Killeen
Alexandria
Bryan
College Station
Coast Guard Sector Houston
Contractor - 1
Baton Rouge
Austin
The Woodlands
Lake Charles
Lafayette
Beaumont
New Orleans
Houston
Texas State Operations Center
EPA - 1
San Antonio
Acuña
Incident Command Post
EPA - 9
Contractor - 5
Mobile Command Post - 1
Victoria
Laredo
Nuevo Laredo
Monclova
New York
Pittsburgh
Philadelphia
EPA HQ
Washington
Richmond
Norfolk
Raleigh
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Contractor - 2
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Resource Location
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US EPA Region 6
Resources Locations Map
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EMERGENCY RESPONSE
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Industrial Sources

Area facilities are reporting theirstatus to TCEQ as they continue to be shutdown or begin to initiate start-up activities.

Spill/Release Response

Hotline Calls as of 1500 on August 30, 2017	
Number of Harvey Related Calls Received During Reporting Period	18
Total Number of Harvey Related Calls to Date	54

On August 30, 2017 the Unified Command had seven teams in the field conducting reconnaissance. The teams consist of personnel from TCEQ, Civil Support Team (CST), EPA, and a USCG. These teams are conducting hazard evaluations of orphaned containers found during field reconnaissance. Evaluations are used to determine actions needed to stabilize and or remove items in the future.

EPA Emergency Response Assets

Upon completion of aerial flight over Arkema this morning, EPA's aerial assessment aircraft will fly aerial reconnaissance over the Corpus Christi area.

Quality Assurance Sampling Plans (QASP)

Regional Emergency Operations Center Environmental Unit members are incorporating Headquarters Emergency Operations Center comments into the EPA QASP forsurface /flood water and dirt These sampling plans have been created to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminates found in storm water and soil that was displaced during the storm.

Drinking Water / Wastewater Assessments

One Water Infrastructure team consisting of two TCEQ staff is slated to visit two systems based on information developed by the TCEQ/EPA call bank in Austin, TX. Additional EPA Region 6 Water Team members are prepared to deploy to Corpus Christi once lodging is established.

EPA continues to support TCEQ in contacting drinking water and waste water systems. EPA deployed 10 personnel to assist TCEQ's Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin, Texas on August 28, 2017.

DW - Total # of Systems: 4512

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending	195
Bacteria Sample Results Pending	5
Out of Contact	22
On generator – lost pressure	4
No problems	368
On generator – never lost pressure	17
No Status	3813
Lost pressure & or Treatment	37
Site visit needed	1
Lifted boil water notice due to negative bacteria samples. Normal Ops resumed	10
Not Operating	40

WW - Total # of Systems: 2469

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending - Phone evaluation only	52
Out of Contact - phone evaluation only	3
No Problems	376
No Status	1976
Waste Water Treat. Plant and/or Collection on Generator or bypass pumps for Lift Station	21
Waste Water Treat. Plant and/or Collection non operational no Sanitary Sewer Overflow	26
WWTP and/or Collection Partially Operational Sanitary Sewer Overflow	15

Boiled Water Notices and Water System Status as Reported by TCEQ		
	Systems	Population
Boil Water Notices (BWN) In Place	185	169,212*
Shutdown Drinking Water Systems	53	115,573
Shut Downs Waste Water Systems	22	NA
Boil Water Notices Lifted	3	351,679
Total Excluding Lifted	68	288,563

Not all systems were reported with populations. Populations is a calculated value (3 times the number of service connections)

EPA Laboratory/ Analytical Services

The Houston laboratory is reporting that they will be closed until Tuesday September 5, 2017. The laboratory and office building is not damaged. EPA has back up capabilities for laboratory services should the Houston facility remain closed.

EPA's organic chemical mobile laboratory is enroute from Denver, Colorado to the Corpus Christi area. The anticipated arrival in San Antonio Thursday, August 31, 2017. The mobile laboratory will be utilized to process environmental samples.

Data Management

Region 6 activated the National Data team to provide support data management activities in Corpus Christi. Two Data Team members have been deployed and are expected to arrive in Corpus Christi by Friday September 1, 2017.

Communications

EPA is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA communication structure and management, and participates in the daily National Incident Communication Conference Line (NICCL) call. EPA initiated its Crisis Communication Plan to ensure rapid response to providing coordinated, accurate, up-to-date information regarding its field activities. EPA's Public Information Office is established in Dallas with forward field components as needed to support the HQ Office of Public Affairs.

Refineries/Fuel Waivers

1. TEXAS: EPA approved the State of Texas' request to extend the Texas fuel waiver to allow use of non-road diesel fuel in on-road applications. This non-road fuel has different tax treatment, and to differentiate it, is colored with red dye.

2. LOUISIANA: A waiver that would allow use of 9.0lb. RVP was approved on 28 August.

3. OKLAHOMA: A statewide low Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fuel waiver request was submitted on August 28, 2017, and amended their request on August 30 expanding 11.5 RVP waiver nationwide.

4. ARKANSAS: The State is drafting a waiver request to temporarily waive the requirement for low 9.0lb RVP fuel.

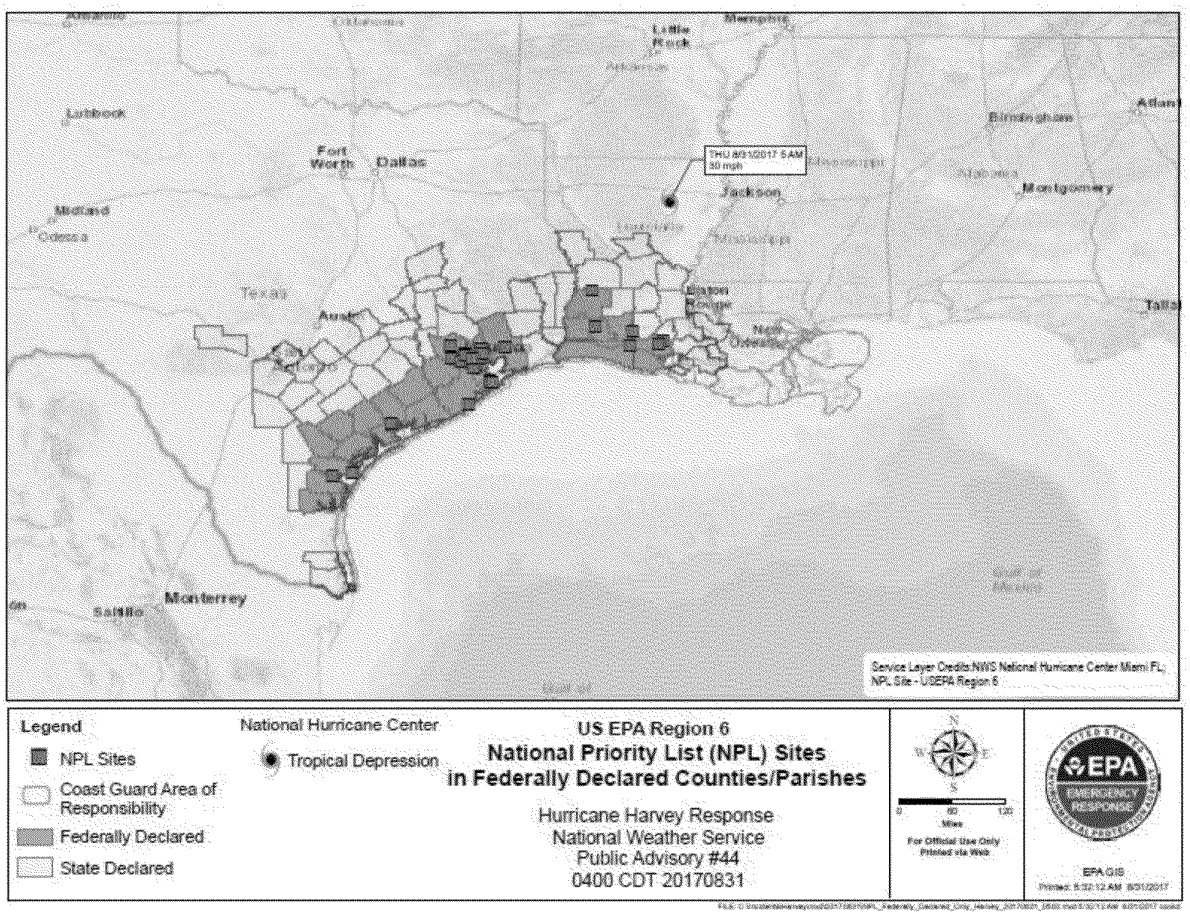
5. On August 30th, EPA issue a waiver for the temporary use of 11.5 PSI RVP gasoline in the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Texas, Louisiana, Florida and the District of Columbia. For Texas and Louisiana, it expands the waiver coverage area from the earlier

waiver granted.

Funding

Funding Sources	Funding Ceiling	Spent to Date	Remaining Balance	Daily Burn Rate
Non Mission Assignment	N/A	$64,200.00	$0.00	
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-01	$20,000.00	$0.00	$20,000.00	
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-03	$8,592,000.00	$75,864.86	$8,516,135.14	$37,932.43
Totals:	$8,612,000.00	$75,864.86	$8,536,135.14	

Superfund NPL Sites



Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties			8/31/2017
SITE NAME	**STATE**	**COUNTY**	**Status Summary**
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	TX	CALHOUN	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
BRINE SERVICE CO.	TX	NUECES	RI Underway, No Impact
BRIO REFINING INC.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
FALCON REFINERY	TX	SAN PATRICIO	RI Underway, No Impact
FRENCH, LTD.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	TX	BRAZORIA	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	TX	HARRIS	GW Remedy Underway, No Reported Impact
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Underway, Impacted
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
MOTCO, INC.	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
PATRICK BAYOU	TX	HARRIS	RI Underway, Impacted
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	TX	LIBERTY	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	TX	HARRIS	Temporary Cap, Impacted
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
TEX-TIN CORP.	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
US OIL RECOVERY	TX	HARRIS	RI Underway, Impacted
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	LA	BEAUREGARD	Pre-RI, No Reported Impact
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	LA	CALCASIEU	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	LA	CAMERON	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
SBA SHIPYARD	LA	JEFFERSON DAVIS	RI Underway, No Reported Impacted
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
D.L. MUD, INC.	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
Legend of NPL Site Status Summary Indicators:			
Impacted	direct information of storm damage: flooding or wind		
No Reported Impact	direct information of no storm damage		
Status not Confirmed	no available information-site not accessible		
RI	remedial investigation		
GW	ground water		

Louisiana Activities

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)

Radiation licensees in the anticipated impacted area have been contacted to discuss storm preparations and contingencies of radiological sources. LDEQ is monitoring the status of nuclear plants Waterford 3, and Riverbend Station; both facilities enacted their preliminary stages of their Severe Weather plans.

Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)

Three Public Water Systems (PWS) are on a Boil Water Advisory (BWA) related to Hurricane Harvey. One Water System is currently out of service in Calcasieu Parish.

ED_001581_00000038

To: Hurricane Harvey Principals[Hurricane_Harvey_Principals@epa.gov]
Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: R6HarveySITL
Sent: Mon 9/4/2017 11:41:54 PM
Subject: HH 1700 Update for 09042017
09042017 1700 Update Final.pdf

Attached is the final version of the Hurricane Harvey 1700 Update for 09042017.

Hurricane Harvey 2017
9/4/2017 – 1500 CDT Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- After a successful controlled burn of the remaining six trailers yesterday, local authorities in coordination with the Harris County Health Department and in consultation with EPA, TCEQ, Harris County Pollution Control, and Arkema, lifted the 1.5-mile radius evacuation order shortly after midnight. As such, Arkema is working with the local authorities to complete the re-population of the residents affected by the evacuation order. EPA responders/assets will remain at the site for the remainder of the operational period and demobilize this afternoon. EPA is embedded with response partners on teams performing DW/WW system assessments, hazard evaluations, and container recovery operations.

- EPA continues to conduct ambient air monitoring in Houston, and is currently evaluating an area of potential concern associated with a Valero facility in Houston. EPA's Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) arrived in Houston and will be operational tomorrow.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ken Wagner, a senior advisor to the Administrator for Regional and State Affairs, and a representative of TCEQ Chairman Shaw's office briefed the Mayor of Houston and other local officials this morning at the Houston Emergency Operations Center. Afterwards, several media outlets joined Acting Regional Administrator Sam Coleman, Chairman Shaw and Albert Kelly, special advisor to the Administrator, to tour three Superfund sites targeted for Phase 2 inspections. The 3 sites scheduled for inspection observation were US Oil Recovery, Highland Acid Pits, and San Jacinto River Waste Pits. In the afternoon, a Congressional delegation led by Senator John Cornyn's office was to be briefed by EPA and TCEQ. Information included a recap of resources dedicated to the Hurricane Response, a summary of NPL site inspections in the impacted counties, information on drinking water and wastewater systems, accomplishments and projections of ongoing work, and recent Arkema facility activities.

ARKEMA

- After a successful controlled burn of the remaining six trailers yesterday, local authorities in coordination with the Harris County Health Department and in consultation with EPA,

TCEQ, Harris County Pollution Control, and Arkema, lifted the 1.5-mile radius evacuation order shortly after midnight. As such, Arkema is working with the local authorities to complete the re-population of the residents affected by the evacuation order.

- Incident operations are gradually shifting to assessment of conditions within the facility to determine if re-entry of repair personnel is safe. An operational priority is to establish temporary cooling capabilities within the warehouse where approximately 750K lbs of ambient temperature organic peroxide is currently being stored. This material has a very high self-ignition temperature and does not currently pose an imminent threat of decomposition, but as a precaution and in concurrence with Unified Command, Arkema is proceeding with a temporary cooling system. At this time, the most practical approach is to place four tons of dry ice inside the building where the peroxide is currently being stored.
- At 10:15 a.m. an Arkema and Harris County Fire Marshall's Office assessment team indicated that the building with the remaining peroxide was safe to enter in order to place the dry ice. This determination was made in response to indoor temperature readings. Dry ice placement should be completed by mid-afternoon.
- EPA responders/assets will remain at the site for the remainder of the operational period and demobilize this afternoon.

PORT ARTHUR/BEAUMONT

EPA has secured an operational staging area in the parking lot of the Central Mall, adjacent to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Marine Safety Unit (MSU) in Port Arthur. Two EPA OSCs are mobilizing from Houston tomorrow along with GIS/Dat a Support. Currently, most of the area is still inaccessible due to flooding. EPA will contin ue to coordinate with local, state and federal response partners to plan for further assessment an d potential response actions once the flood waters recede. The priority for the next operationa l period is to set up command posts with work space and continue developing an operational structure to begin field operations.

DEBRIS RECOVERY

EPA currently has no mission assignment for debris recovery operations.

AIR MONITORING

EPA's mobile air monitoring Trace Atmospheric Gas A nalyzer (TAGA) bus along with EPA personnel will be arriving in Houston today.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality w as unable to acquire lodging for the staff of its mobile air monitoring lab and therefore will be unable to assist with air monitoring in Port Arthur/Beaumont.

EPA continues to conduct air monitoring in Southeas t Houston including the Manchester community. Two detections of 0.7 and 1.1 parts per million of volatile organic compounds were detected. The On Scene Coordinator has requested EPA's TAGA Unit respond to conduct further air monitoring.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

No new information to report since the Morning Report.

WATER SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

Additional personnel were deployed to assist Region6 with conducting Drinking Water and Waste Water assessments. Field teams receive their list of Drinking Water and Waste Water Systems for assessment based on their location.

SUPERFUND INSPECTIONS PLANNED

EPA teams continued on-site inspections of Superfund sites.

The updated Status/Schedule for NPL Inspections is below:

- Phase 1 – 41 sites completed 9/1/17
- Phase 2 – 11 sites require inspection
  - Planned

    San Jacinto – 9/4/17 Miller
    Highlands Acid Pit – 9/4/17 Miller
    French Ltd. – 9/5/17 Sullivan
    Gulfco Marine – 9/5/17 Abshire
    Malone Services – 9/5/17 Miller
    Patrick Bayou – 9/5/17 Abshire
    Petro-Chemical Systems – 9/5/17 Abshire
    Triangle Chemical – 9/5/17 Sullivan
    US Oil Recovery – 9/4/17 Miller
    Bailey Waste – 9/5/17 Sullivan
    Geneva – **complete 9/3/17**

FIELD RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The table below displays the teams deployed in the Corpus Christi and Houston Branches during this operational period:

Quantity and Types of Teams Deployed 9/4/2017			
Team Type	**Corpus Christi Branch**	**Houston Branch**	**Port Arthur / Beaumont**
Water Assessment Teams	0	10	
Hazard Evaluation	1	21	3
Oil Discharge Assessment	2	3	0
Container Recovery	2	0	
Oil Recovery Group	3	0	
ER/Recovery Group	1	1	
Arkema Group	0	1	
Air Operations Group	0	1	
Air Monitoring		1	

CORPUS CHRISTI BRANCH:

- The Corpus Christi Branch Oil Discharge Recovery Group is in the process of prioritizing vessel recovery operations and contacting marinas to locate vessels in need of assessment and also for staging possibilities.
- The Oil Discharge Assessment Group (ODA) 1 provided oversight of the removal of oil from the Signet Enterprise at Aransas Pass. Thus far, 20,000 gallons of diesel have been removed and 280,000 gallons remains.
- ODA 1 monitored the Drill Ship DPSDS1 as it was successfully free floated with no issues or pollution observed. The Drill Ship DPSDS1 is currently en route to Sherwin Alumina dock.
- The Corpus Christi Branch Hazard Evaluation Group transitioned from two teams to one and the Oil Discharge Assessment Group transitioned from three teams to two teams. The Oil Discharge Recovery Group transitioned from two teams to three teams.

	CONTAINERS			**TOTAL**
	Drums [55 gals]	**Large Containers [<55 gals]**	**Large Containers [>55 gals]**	
9/3/2017	7	0	0	7
Total to datc	39	32	2	73

HOUSTON BRANCH:

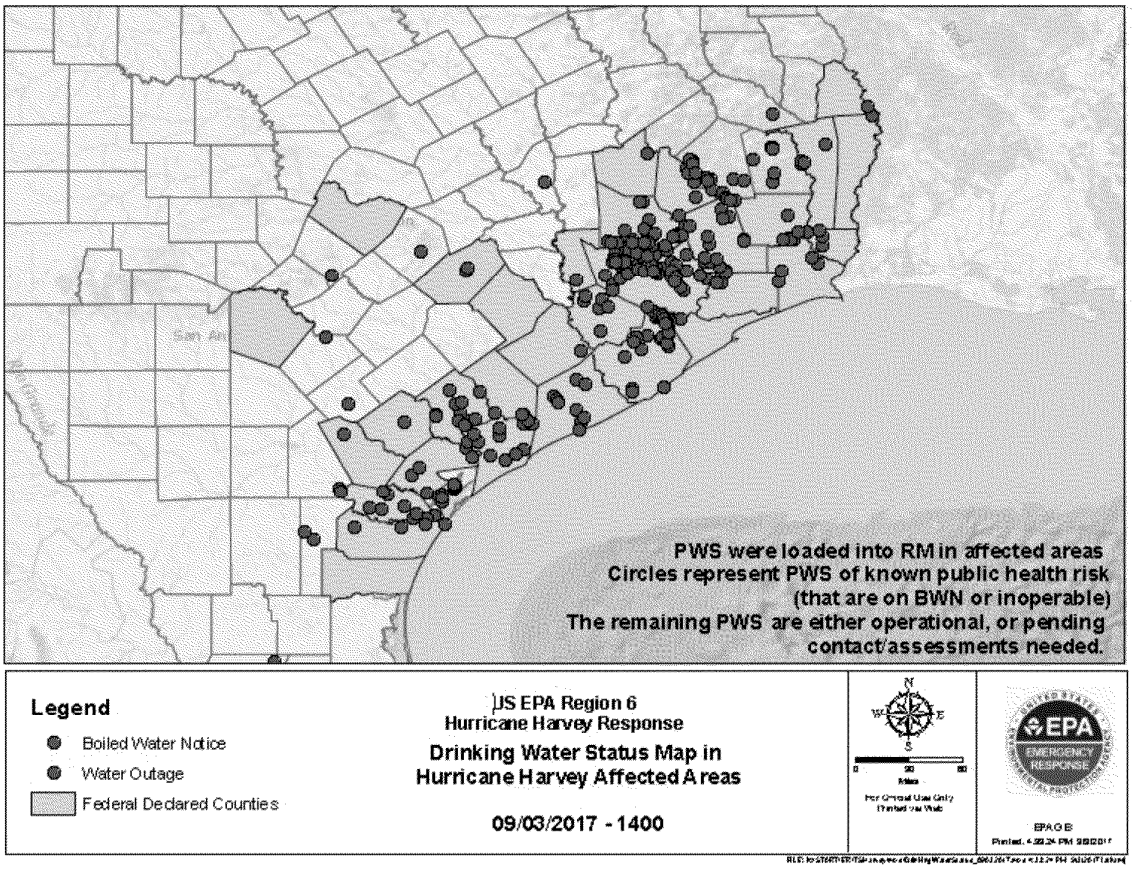
- The Houston Branch has received an influx of upwards of 80 personnel and is ramping up Hazard Evaluations. The Houston Branch has added two deputy branch directors to maintain adequate span of control ratios.
- ASPECT continued to conduct assessments of the Houston area.
- Two USCG Liaison Officers and additional EPA Planning personnel have integrated into the Houston Branch.

PORT ARTHUR/BEAUMONT BRANCH:

- The Port Arthur / Beaumont Branch should be fully stood up by Wednesday, September 6, 2017. EPA transitioned two drinking water personnel to Beaumont to assist with DW/WW assessments.

DRINKING WATER / WASTEWATER ASSESSMENTS

EPA continues to support TCEQ in contacting drinkin g water and waste water systems with 10 personnel manning TCEQ's Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin.


PWS were loaded into RM in affected areas
Circles represent PWS of known public health risk
(that are on BWN or inoperable)
The remaining PWS are either operational, or pending
contact/assessments needed.
Legend
Boiled Water Notice
Water Outage
Federal Declared Counties
US EPA Region 6
Hurricane Harvey Response
Drinking Water Status Map in
Hurricane Harvey Affected Areas
09/03/2017 - 1400
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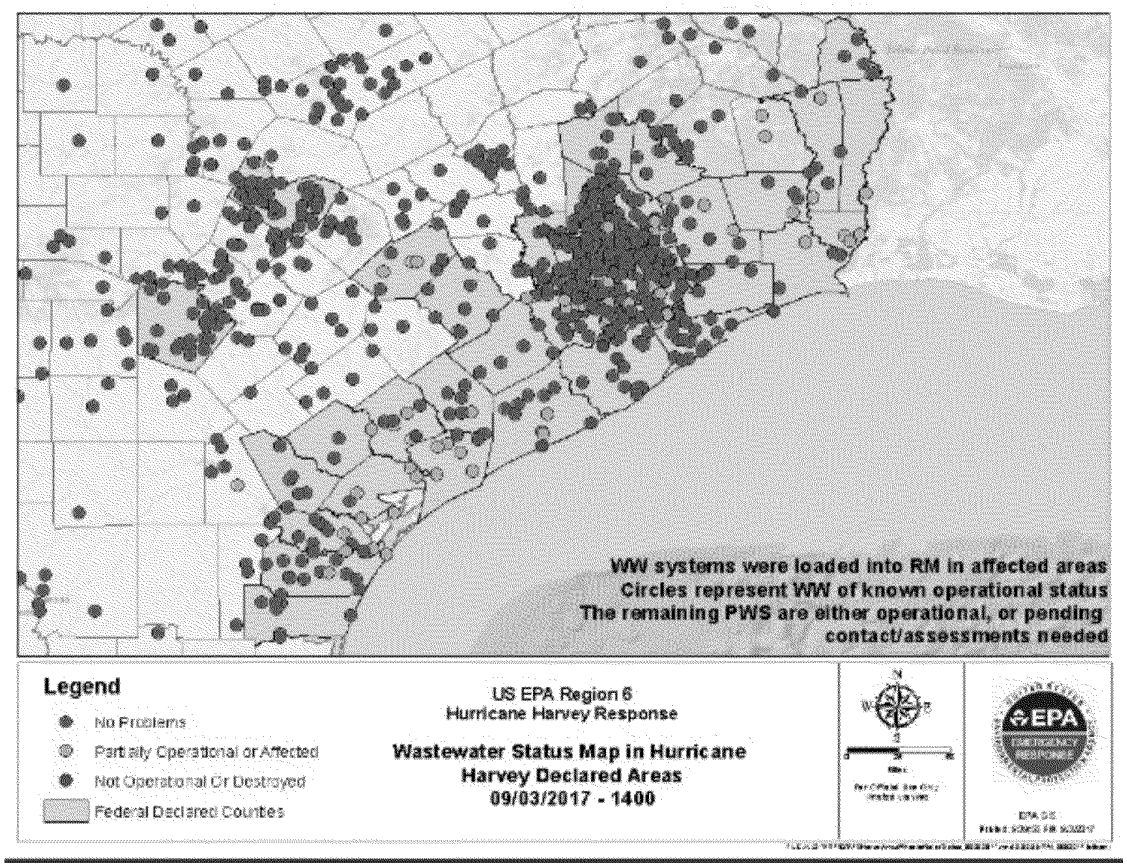
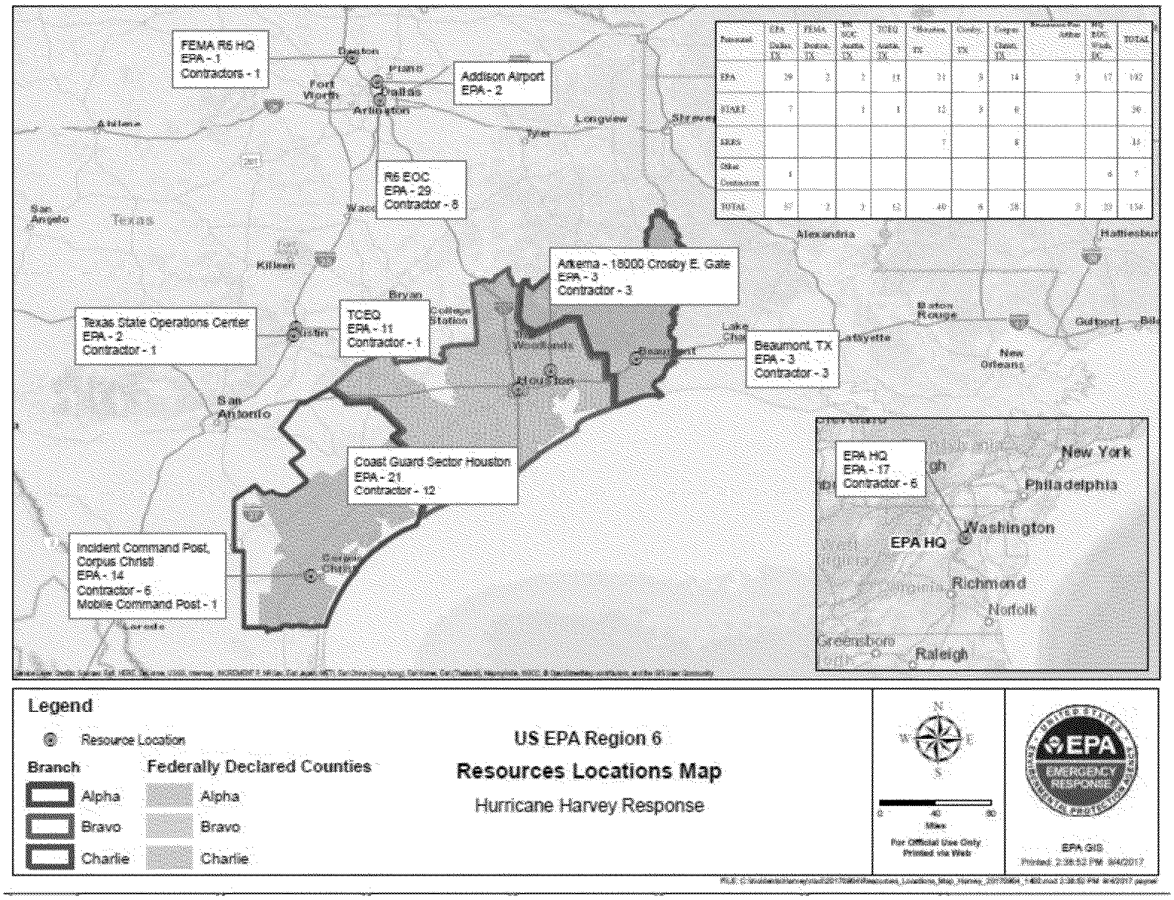
W
E
S
Miles
For Official Use Only
EPA
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE



EPA RESOURCES

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	TX SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	*Houston, TX	Crosby, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	Beaumont/ Port Arthur	HQ EOC, Wash, DC	TOTAL
EPA	29	2	2	11	21	3	14	3	17	102
START	7		1	1	12	3	6			30
ERRS					7		8			15
Other Contractors	1								6	7
TOTAL	37	2	3	12	40	6	28	3	23	154



FUNDING

September 4, 2017

SitRep
September 4, 2017, UPDATED 1300 hours

Funding Sources	Funding Ceiling	Funding Ceiling Less Indirect	Spent to Date	Remaining Balance	Daily Burn Rate	Days Remaining
Non Mission Assignment	N/A		$64,200.00	$0.00		
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-01	$20,000.00	$17,654.00	$13,424.00	$4,230.00	$2,848.00	1.49
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-03	$8,592,000.00	$7,584,077.00	$3,419,017.00	$4,165,060.00	$236,348.84	17.62
Totals:	$8,612,000.00	$7,601,731.00	$3,496,641.00	$4,169,290.00		

** Indirect costs represent the money the Cincinnati Shared Service Center takes off the top to manage the Mission Assignments

*Burn rate does not include daily ERRS amounts, not yet received. The burn does include START & ASPECT.

REFINERIES/FUEL WAIVERS

No New Information.

The Department of Energy authorized the Strategic P etroleum Reserve (SPR) to negotiate and execute an emergency exchange agreement with the Ph illips 66 Lake Charles Refinery. This

decision will authorize 200,000 barrels of sweet crude oil and 300,000 barrels of sour crude oil to be drawn down from SPR's West Hackberry, Louisiana (LA) site and delivered via pipeline to the Phillips 66 refinery.

Four No Action Assurance (NAA) letters were signed by EPA on September 1, 2017, to help address fuel shortages. NAAs will help expedite the distribution of existing gasoline supplies in both Texas and Louisiana while the refineries work to re-start and resume normal operations. For each NAA, EPA will exercise discretion not to pursue enforcement for violations of the regulations identified in the NAAs. Each NAA is effective for two weeks, or until September 15. It is anticipated that these NAAs will allow for the immediate distribution in Texas of 10 million or more gallons of gasoline to consumers.

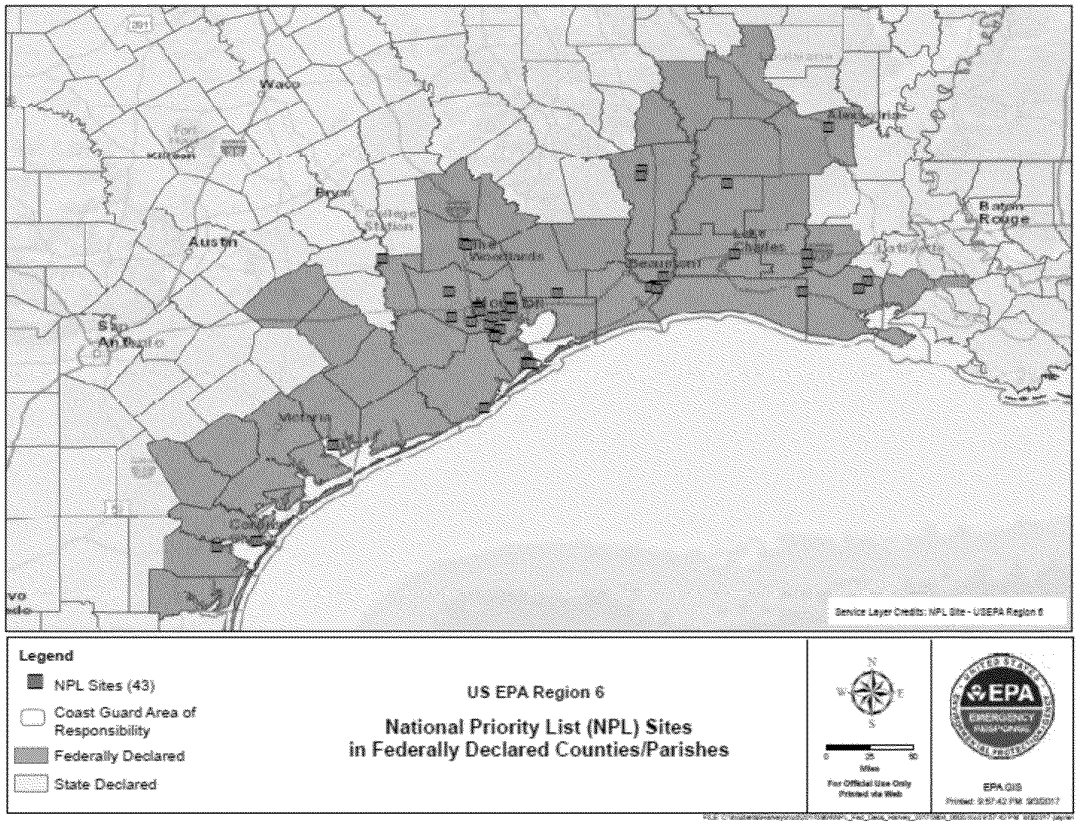
Texas NAA for Vapor Recovery Systems: Several federal regulations and the Texas State Implementation Plan (SIP) require that bulk gasoline, marine, and rail loading terminals operate a vapor control system to collect the fuel vapors displaced from tank trucks during product loading. This NAA allows the loading and unloading of fuel at terminals that have damaged or inoperable vapor recovery devices or that are otherwise not equipped with such devices.

Texas NAA for Truck Loading at Petroleum Distribution Terminals: Several federal regulations and the Texas SIP require that gasoline tank trucks obtain testing and certification that the tank trucks are vapor tight. This NAA allows tank trucks to load and unload fuel at terminals even though the trucks may not be registered with the terminals as having completed all the testing for tank tightness or have the documentation on hand to prove it.

Texas NAA for Roof Landings at Gasoline Storage Vessels: This relates to several federal regulations and the Texas SIP covering storage vessels with external floating roofs. Specifically, when the operator removes product from the vessel such that the roof lands on the vessel's legs, such action must be a continuous motion, i.e. the process of re-filling the vessel must begin immediately after roof landing. This NAA will allow roof landings without requiring immediate re-filling of the vessel.

Louisiana NAA for Truck Loading at Petroleum Distribution Terminals: Several federal regulations and the Louisiana SIP require that gasoline tank trucks obtain testing and certification that the tank trucks are vapor tight. This NAA allows tank trucks to load and unload fuel at terminals even though the trucks may not be registered with the terminals as having completed all the testing for tank tightness or have the documentation on hand to prove it.

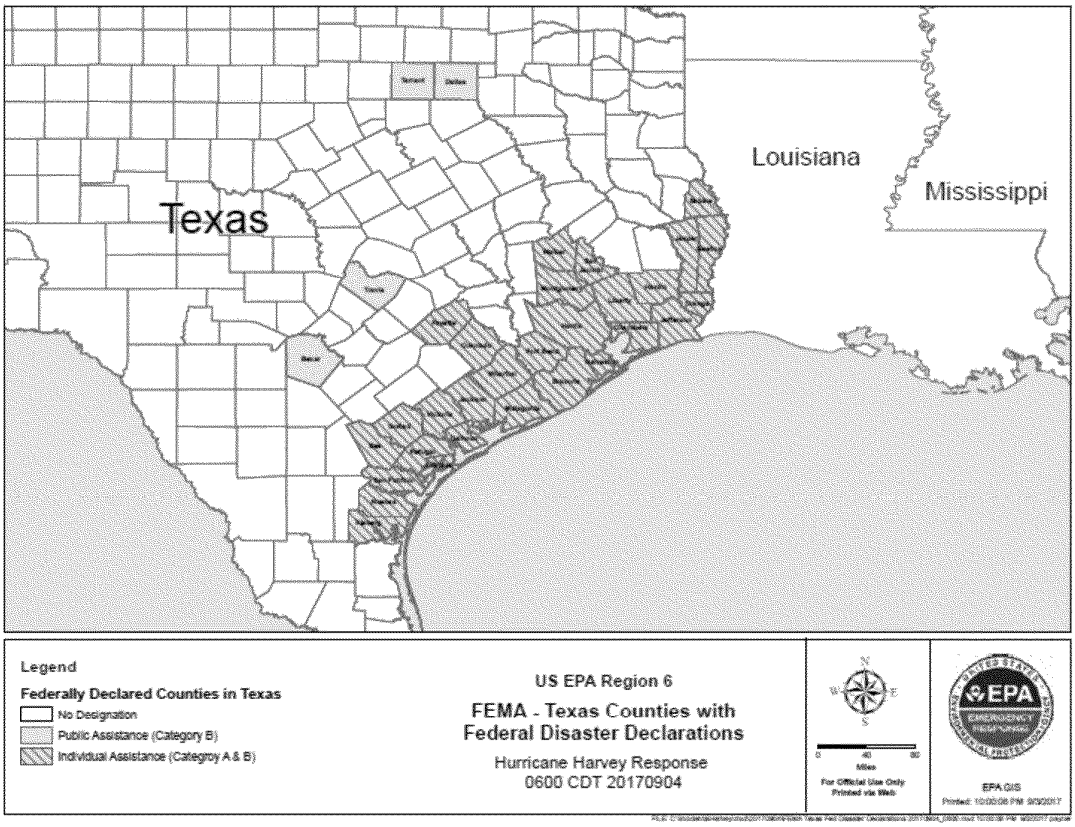
SUPERFUND NPL SITES



SUPERFUND NPL SITES (Continued)

Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties					9/4/2017
Hurricane Harvey Rapid Response Assessment	Phase 1	Phase 2		Phase 3	All Phases Completed
Site Name	Rapid Response Assessment	Site Inspection Needed	Inspected	Additional Response Action	
TEXAS					
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
BAILEY WASTE DISPOSAL	9/1/2017	Yes			
BRINE SERVICE CO.	8/30/2017	Yes	8/30/2017	No	8/30/2017
BRIO REFINING INC.	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
CONROE CREOSOTING COMPANY	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	8/30/2017	No			8/30/2017
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
FALCON REFINERY	8/30/2017	Yes	8/30/2017	No	8/30/2017
FRENCH, LTD.	9/1/2017	Yes			
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	9/1/2017	Yes	9/3/2017	No	9/3/2017
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	9/1/2017	Yes			
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
HART CREOSOTING	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	9/1/2017	Yes			
JASPER CREOSOTING	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	9/1/2017	Yes			
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
MOTCO, INC.	8/31/2017	No			8/31/2017
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
PALMER BARGE LINE	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
PATRICK BAYOU	9/1/2017	Yes			
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	9/1/2017	Yes			
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	9/1/2017	Yes			
SHERIDAN DISPOSAL	9/3/2017	No			9/3/2017
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
STAR LAKE CANAL	8/30/2017	No			8/30/2017
STATE MARINE OF PORT ARTHUR	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
TEX-TIN CORP.	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
TRIANGLE CHEMICAL COMPANY	9/1/2017	Yes			
UNITED CREOSOTING CO.	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
US OIL RECOVERY	9/1/2017	Yes			
LOUISIANA					
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
D.L. MUD, INC.	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
EVR-WOOD TREATING/EVANGELINE REFINING COMPANY	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	8/31/2017	No			8/31/2017
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	8/29/2017	No			8/29/2017
SBA SHIPYARD	9/1/2017	No			9/1/2017
RUSTON FOUNDRY	9/3/2017	No			9/3/2017
STATUS SUMMARY					
Rapid Response Assessment Completed	43				
Sites with no further action	33				
Sites in Phase 2	10				

FEMA – TEXAS COUNTIES WITH DISASTER DECLARATIONS



PHOTOS

EPA OSC recording information as part of a Hazard Evaluation Team in Wallace, Texas

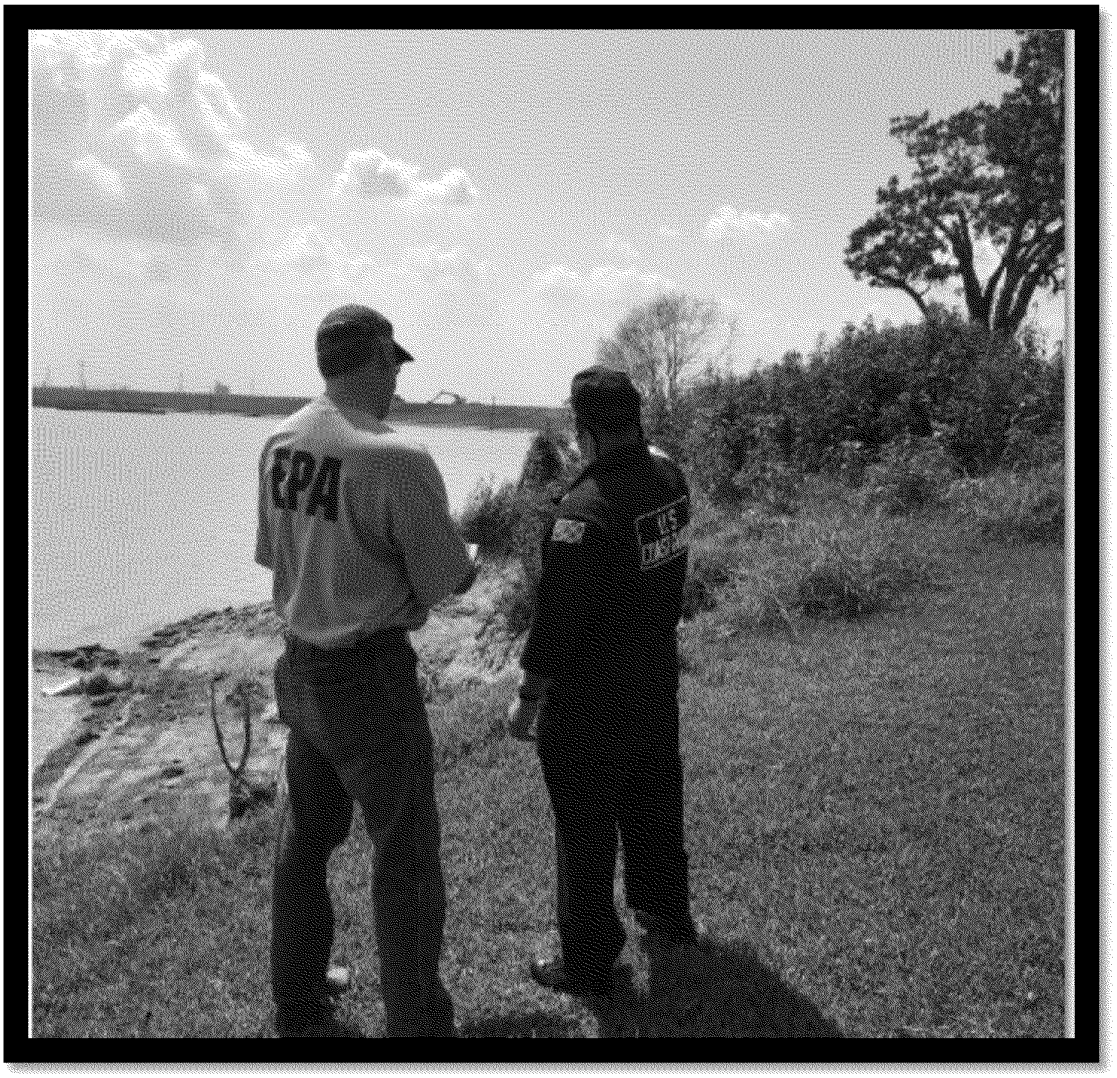
PHOTOS

EPA and USCG conducting orphan container recovery in Victoria, Texas

EPA and USCG conducting orphan container recovery in Victoria, Texas

PHOTOS

EPA and USCG performing a field assessment near the Houston Ship Channel



To: Hurricane Harvey Principals[Hurricane_Harvey_Principals@epa.gov]
Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: Restivo, Angela
Sent: Wed 8/30/2017 10:40:15 PM
Subject: HH 8302017 1700 Update
8-30-17 1700 Update v3 final.pdf

Tropical Storm Harvey 2017
8/30/2017 – 1700 CDT Update

Highlights

Texas

The EPA Aspect aircraft has completed its initial overflight of the Arkema facility in Crosby, TX. No vapors were detected migrating from the site and no thermal abnormalities were detected on the overflight. Arkema has estimated that the first trailer could reach auto ignition temperatures within the next 24 hours. Due to health and safety concerns Harris County Fire Department has adopted a defensive posture at the facility and is maintaining a 1.5-mile evacuation around the facility. Should a release/fire occur, Aspect will collect information about concentration of chemicals in the smoke cloud.

EPA, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas General Land Office (TGLO) and US Coast Guard (USCG) have established Emergency Support Function (ESF) 10 Unified Command to respond to the impacts of Hurricane Harvey. The Unified Command Post is currently in Corpus Christi. As of August 30, 2017, six EPA Incident Management Team members are in Unified Command.

Four EPA Region 6 water assessment team members are ready to deploy to Corpus Christi to conduct additional water system inspections. Due to fuel and lodging shortages in the Corpus Christi area, deployment of the team was delayed today.

Two National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund sites were inspected on August 30, 2017, to asses impacts from the hurricane. The two sites are the Falcon Refinery Site and the Brine Service Site both located in Corpus Christi, Texas. Neither site showed significant damage requiring emergency clean-up.

Administrator is visiting Corpus Christi today and the State Operations Center in Austin tomorrow.

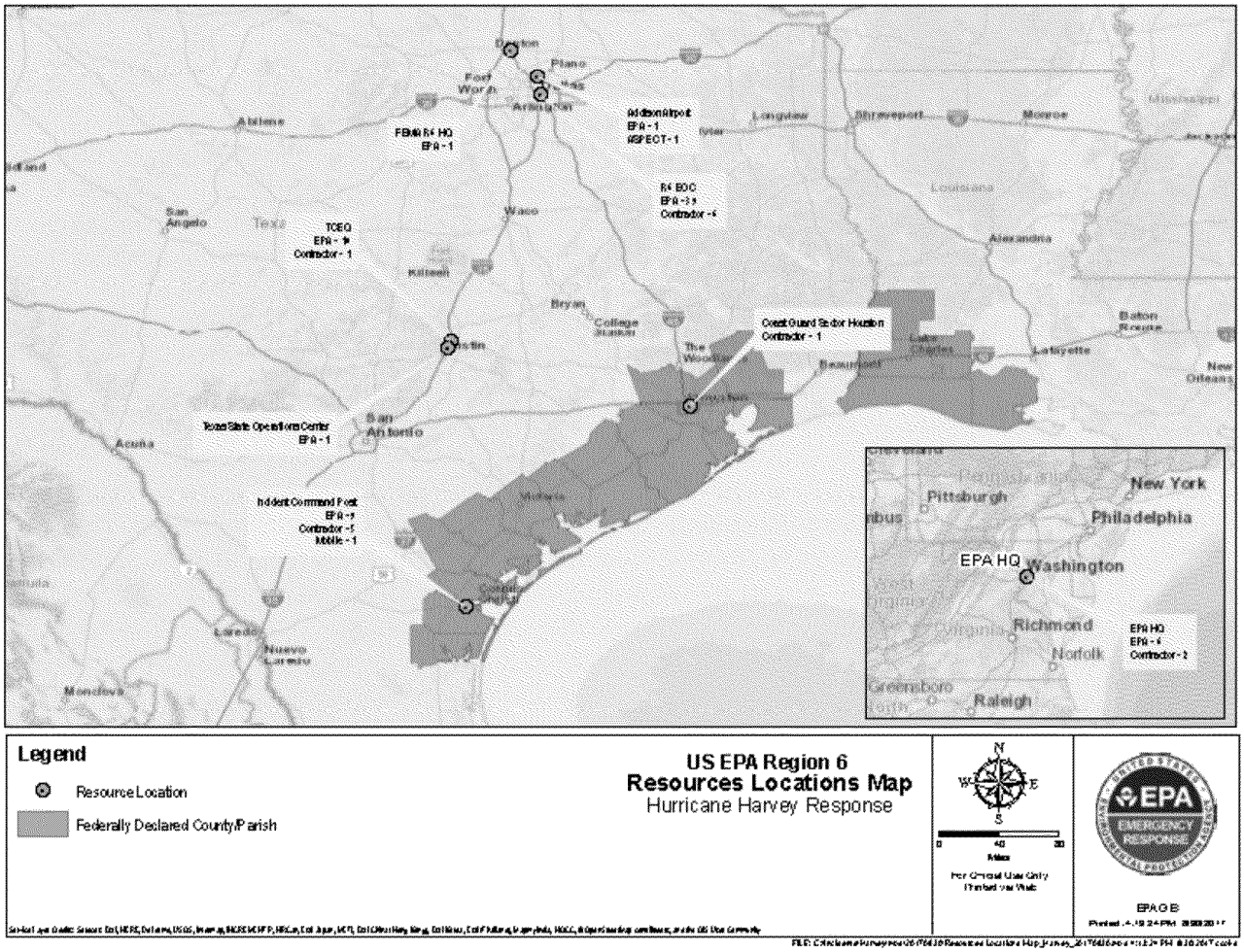
There has been an expansion of the Federally Declared counties in Texas. An additional fourteen counties were added today. Three of the fourteen were added for emergency services such as hosting mega shelters.

Louisiana

EPA continues to participate in National Weather Service (NWS) and Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) conference calls. EPA coordinates with LDEQ periodically throughout the day.

Resources

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	Texas SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	HQ EOC Wash DC	Totals
EPA	39	1	1	10		9	6	66
START	5			1	1	5		7
IT Contractor	1						2	3
TOTAL	45	1	1	11	1	14	8	76



Industrial Sources

Area facilities are reporting their status to TCEQ as they continue to be shut down or begin to initiate start-up activities.

Spill/Release Response

Hotline Calls as of 1500 on August 30, 2017	
Number of Harvey Related Calls Received During Reporting Period	18
Total Number of Harvey Related Calls to Date	54

On August 30, 2017 the Unified Command has seven teams in the field conducting reconnaissance. The teams consist of personnel from TCEQ, Civil Support Team (CST), EPA, and a USCG. These teams are conducting hazard evaluations of orphaned containers found during field reconnaissance. Evaluations are used to determine actions needed to stabilize and or remove items in the future.

EPA Emergency Response Assets

EPA's aerial assessment aircraft is conducting aerial reconnaissance over the Corpus Christi area.

Quality Assurance Sampling Plans (QASP)

Regional Emergency Operations Center Environmental Unit members are incorporating Headquarters Emergency Operations Center comments into the EPA QASP for surface /flood water and dirt. These sampling plans have been created to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminates found in storm water and soil that was displaced during the storm.

Drinking Water / Wastewater Assessments

One Water Infrastructure team consisting of two TCEQ staff is slated to visit two systems based on information developed by the TCEQ/EPA call bank in Austin, TX. Additional EPA Region 6 Water Team members are prepared to deploy to Corpus Christi once lodging is established.

EPA is supporting TCEQ in contacting drinking water and waste water systems. EPA deployed 10 personnel to assist TCEQ's Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin, Texas on August 28, 2017.

Drinking Water Systems - Total # of Systems: 4510

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending	56
Out of Contact	32
On generator – lost pressure	5
No problems	210
On generator – never lost pressure	15
No Status	4155
Lost pressure & or Treatment	7
Site visit needed	2
Lifted boil water notice due to negative bacteria samples. Normal Ops resumed	8
Not Operating	20

Waste Water Systems- Total # of Systems: 2466

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending - Phone evaluation only	41
Out of Contact - phone evaluation only	6
No Problems	250
No Status	2127
Waste Water Treat. Plant and/or Collection on Generator or bypass pumps for Lift Station	16
Waste Water Treat. Plant and/or Collection non-operational no Sanitary Sewer Overflow	19
WWTP and/or Collection Partially Operational Sanitary Sewer Overflow	7

Boil Water Notices and Water System Status as reported by TCEQ		
	Systems	Population
Boil Water Notices (BWN) In Place	52	184,941
Shutdown Drinking Water Systems	23	103,622
Shut Downs Waste Water Systems	17	NA
Boil Water Notices Lifted	2	332,493

EPA Laboratory/ Analytical Services

The Houston laboratory is reporting that they will be closed until Tuesday September 5, 2017. The laboratory and office building is not damaged. EPA has back up capabilities for laboratory services should the Houston facility remain closed.

EPA's organic chemical mobile laboratory is enroute from Denver, Colorado to the Corpus Christi area. The anticipated arrival in Corpus Christi is Friday September 1, 2017. The mobile laboratory will be utilized to process environmental samples.

Data Management
Region 6 activated the National Data team to provide support data management activities in Corpus Christi. Two Data Team members have been deployed and are expected to arrive in Corpus Christi by Friday September 1, 2017.

Communications
EPA is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA communication structure and management, and participates in the daily National Incident Communication Conference Line (NICCL) call. EPA has initiated its Crisis Communication Plan to ensure rapid response to providing coordinated, accurate, up-to-date information regarding its field activities. EPA's Public Information Office will be established in Dallas with forward field components as needed to support the HQ Office of Public Affairs.

Refineries/Fuel Waivers

1. TEXAS: EPA has approved the State of Texas' request to extend the Texas fuel waiver to allow use of non-road diesel fuel in on-road applications. This non-road fuel has different tax treatment, and to differentiate it, is colored with red dye. We need to waive the limitations in our regulations and then IRS needs to issue a waiver as well.

2. LOUISIANA: A waiver that would allow use of 9.0lb. RVP was approved on 28 August.

3. OKLAHOMA: A statewide low Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fuel waiver request was submitted on August 28, 2017, and amended their request on August 30 expanding 11.5 RVP waiver nationwide.

4. ARKANSAS: The State is drafting a waiver request to temporarily waive the requirement for low 9.0lb RVP fuel.

5. On August 30th, EPA issue a waiver for the temporary use of 11.5 PSI RVP gasoline in the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Texas, Louisiana, Florida and the District of Columbia. For Texas and Louisiana, it expands the waiver coverage area from the earlier waiver granted.

Funding

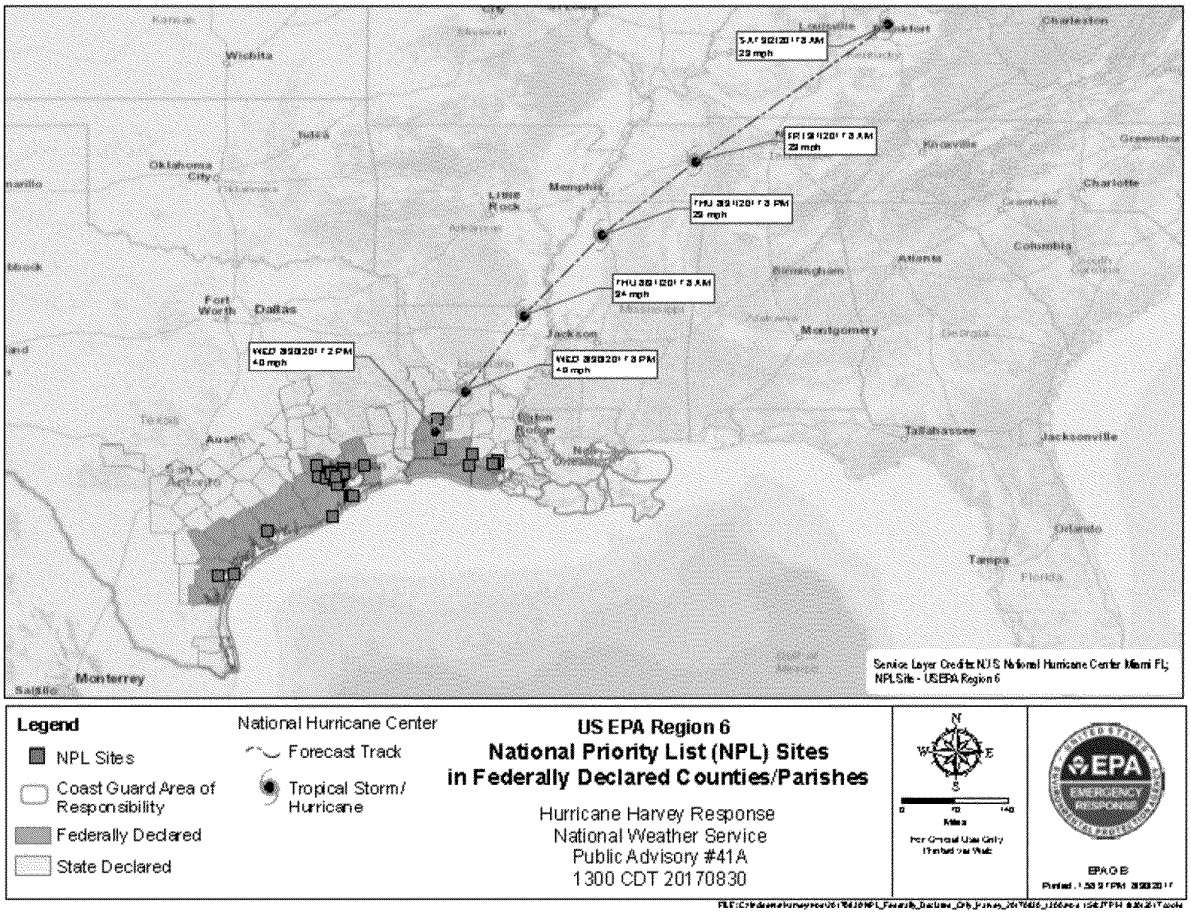
Funding Sources	Funding Ceiling	Spent to Date	Remaining Balance	Daily Burn Rate
Non Mission Assignment	N/A	$64,200.00	$0.00	
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-01	$20,000.00	$0.00	$20,000.00	
MA 4332DR-TX-EPA-03	$8,592,000.00	$75,864.86	$8,516,135.14	$37,932.43
Totals:	$8,612,000.00	$75,864.86	$8,536,135.14	

EPA has received a Mission Assignment (MA) to assist the State of Texas with drinking water, wastewater and Hazmat recovery operations. This Mission Assignment for $8.5 million added 170 EPA and USCG personnel to the TCEQ Hurricane Harvey response in Corpus Christi, Houston and surrounding impacted areas. This MA is for support of assessment and response operations to actual or threatened spill or release of hazardous materials and oil. Assistance includes

response to release/discharges from fixed facilities, as well as orphaned containers and mobile sources.

Superfund NPL Sites

Region 6 Remedial Project Managers continue to monitor and assess the status of NPL sites in the impacted areas. Some sites continue to be inundated with flood water. Assessments of those site will be conducted as flood waters recede. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site is experiencing severe flooding. The highest point of the temporary cap is under 5-feet of flood water. Floodwaters are not expected to recede for several days. The US Oil Recovery Site responsible parties notified the NRC that low-levels of contaminants in residual sludge from the former wastewater treatment plant are being released into floodwaters. Other impacted sites are experiencing varying degrees of flooding with no reported releases.



Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties **8/30/2017**

SITE NAME	STATE	COUNTY	Status Summary
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	TX	CALHOUN	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
BRINE SERVICE CO.	TX	NUECES	RI underway, Impacted
BRIO REFINING INC.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
FALCON REFINERY	TX	SAN PATRICIO	RI underway, Impacted
FRENCH, LTD.	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	TX	BRAZORIA	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	TX	HARRIS	GW Remedy Underway, No Reported Impact
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Underway, Impacted
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
MOTCO, INC.	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Complete, Status not Confirmed
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
PATRICK BAYOU	TX	HARRIS	RI Underway, Impacted
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	TX	LIBERTY	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	TX	HARRIS	Temporary Cap, impacted
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
TEX-TIN CORP.	TX	GALVESTON	NPL Remedy Complete, Impacted
US OIL RECOVERY	TX	HARRIS	RI Underway, Impacted
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	LA	BEAUREGARD	Pre-RI, No Reported Impact
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	LA	CALCASIEU	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	LA	CAMERON	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
SBA SHIPYARD	LA	JEFFERSON DAVIS	RI Underway, No Reported Impact
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, Reported Impact
D.L. MUD, INC.	LA	VERMILION	NPL Remedy Complete, No Reported Impact

Legend of NPL Site Status Summary Indicators	
Impacted	Direct information of storm damage: flooding or wind
No Reported Impact	Direct information of no storm damage
Status not Confirmed	No available information-site not accessible

Louisiana Activities

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)

Radiation licensees in the anticipated impacted area have been contacted to discuss storm preparations and contingencies of radiological sources. LDEQ is monitoring the status of nuclear plants Waterford 3, and Riverbend Station; both facilities enacted their preliminary stages of their Severe Weather plans.

Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)

Three Public Water Systems (PWS) are on a Boil Water Advisory (BWA) related to Hurricane Harvey. One Water System is currently out of service in Calcasieu Parish.

To: R6Press[R6Press@epa.gov]
From: Hubbard, Joseph
Sent: Fri 9/15/2017 3:39:02 PM
Subject: Daily News Digest, Friday, Sept. 15
Daily News Digest 09152017 .pdf

Hurricane Response:

1 Independent Monitors Found Benzene Levels After Harvey Six Times Higher Than Guidelines, ProPublica, 9/14/17

http://projects.propublica.org/graphics/harvey-manchester

As a longtime resident of Manchester, Guadalupe Hernandez is used to the chemical smells that waft through his southeast Houston, Texas neighborhood, a low-income, predominantly Hispanic community near a Valero Energy refinery. But when Hurricane Harvey blew in the weekend of Aug. 26, the stench became noticeably stronger for about five hours, a scent like "glue or boiled eggs," he said.

2 EPA won't release benzene levels collected post-Harvey; private tests show elevated levels, Texas Tribune

https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/14/epa-wont-release-benzene-levels-collected-after-harvey-private-monitor/

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3 Valero Houston Plant Underestimated Harvey Benzene Leak, NY Times,

https://www.wsj.com/articles/valero-houston-plant-underestimated-harvey-benzene-leak-1505432176

The chemical plant that released a cloud of a carcinogenic chemical amid Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath in Houston's Manchester neighborhood in August emitted far more of the chemical than it had previously disclosed, environmental regulators said Thursday. The plant, Valero Energy Partners ' Houston refinery, suffered a hurricane-related spill Aug. 27 from the damaged roof of a light crude storage tank, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concluded in an

investigation.

4 EPA/TCEQ: Updated status of systems affected by Harvey

http://www.gilmermirror.com/view/full_story/27479023/article-EPA-TCEQ--Updated-status-of-systems-affected-by-Harvey?instance=home_news_bullets

Working together, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality continue to coordinate with local, state and federal officials to address the human health and environmental impacts of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, especially the water systems in the affected areas. The TCEQ has approximately 500 people and EPA has 263 people assisting in response to this natural disaster.

5 Oil and chemical spills from Hurricane Harvey big, but dwarfed by Katrina, Reuters

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-storm-harvey-spills/oil-and-chemical-spills-from-hurricane-harvey-big-but-dwarfed-by-katrina-idUSKCN1BQ1E8

More than 22,000 barrels of oil, refined fuels and chemicals spilled at sites across Texas in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, along with millions of cubic feet of natural gas and hundreds of tons of other toxic substances, a Reuters review of company reports to the U.S. Coast Guard shows. The spills, clustered around the heart of the U.S. oil industry, together rank among the worst environmental mishaps in the country in years, but fall far short of the roughly 190,000 barrels spilled in Louisiana in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina - the last major storm to take dead aim at the U.S. Gulf Coast.

6 Hurricane Harvey floodwaters loaded with E. coli from sewage, fecal bacteria, WMAR

http://www.abc2news.com/news/national/hurricane-harvey-floodwaters-contain-sewage-fecal-bacteria

Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath have dumped trillions of gallons of rain across Texas and Louisiana over six days. Homes, office buildings and other structures along the Gulf Coast and in Houston's Harris County, were flooded, their occupants forced to find higher ground. To reach safety, most local residents waded through the murky streams, in some cases for hours.

7 Harvey's Poorest Victims Will Never Rebuild. They're Getting Evicted, Mother Jones

http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2017/09/harveys-poorest-victims-will-never-rebuild-theyre-getting-evicted/

Hilton Kelley has been sounding off on Facebook Live the past few days about families who evacuated their homes to escape Hurricane Harvey and are now getting eviction notices. The families live in Port Arthur, Texas, the small Gulf Coast city about 90 miles east of Houston, but are currently scattered across Louisiana and Texas. Kelley himself had to evacuate—his fourth time doing so in the last 15 years due to hurricane flooding—but was able to make it back to his home last week. He's now trying to locate as many dispersed families as possible via social media to find out who hasn't come back and why. That's when he found out about the eviction notices.

8 Include Superfund site in Harvey relief efforts, Baytown Sun

http://baytownsun.com/opinion/guest_columns/article_5d22a702-998b-11e7-b9e6-97f822faed76.html

We expect some basic things from government: most people agree that protection from enemies, both foreign and domestic describes one key role. We have spent huge amounts to fight foreign enemies, but combating the problems we face at home does not come easy for Austin or Washington, and our community hurts because of it.

9 Harvey and Irma present nearly perfect conditions for Zika-spreading mosquitoes, AP

http://wtop.com/government/2017/09/harvey-and-irma-present-nearly-perfect-conditions-for-zika-spreading-mosquitoes/

Even as the floodwaters from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma begin to recede, significant but less obvious health threats remain. The standing water the storms have left behind will almost certainly cause an explosion of the mosquito population. In addition to the already difficult task of recovery, the affected areas will need to stem the mosquito population growth to avoid the potential for a disease outbreak.

10 Lingering threats to health, Houston Chron

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Lingering-threats-to-health-12199200.php

It took about two weeks for firefighters to start dying from radiation sickness at the Chernobyl nuclear plant. As they rushed into the flames in the Ukrainian morning, the crew didn't know if

they were responding to an electrical fire or a core meltdown, nor were they informed about the radioactive threat posed by the debris and smoke. To date, seven firefighter deaths have been attributed to the 1986 disaster - the most recent in 2004, when one of the heads of the fire brigade died from cancer.

11 Planned closure of Houston EPA lab draws protests, Houston Chron

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Planned-closure-of-Houston-EPA-lab-draws-protests-12199382.php

Conservationists and labor union officials argued Wednesday that the potential closing of the Environmental Protection Agency's regional lab in Houston, which is expected to play a key role in Hurricane Harvey recovery, is among harmful impacts of the Trump administration's drive to slice staff and mission in the agency. The EPA's Region 6 Environmental Services Laboratory, which serves a five-state region, is scheduled for closing when the lease on its rented, 41,000 square-foot space in southwest Houston expires in 2020, officials of the American Federation of Government Employees said they were told.

Around the Region:

12 Highway 84 Landfill opponents, city clash on pollution record of existing landfill, Waco Tribune, 9/15/17

http://www.wacotrib.com/news/city_of_waco/highway-landfill-opponents-city-clash-on-pollution-record-of-existing/article_71108abb-fb01-55e3-97a5-741883db3ec8.html

The campaign against a new landfill off Highway 84 has opened up a new front, as opponents allege that past city mismanagement of the existing landfill next door fouled Lake Waco. In a press release this week, Citizens Against the Highway 84 Landfill cite environmental violations that state regulators found in 2001 and 2003 as evidence that runoff from the landfill polluted Waco's drinking water source.

13 Belton: Dog Ridge Water Supply Corp issues boil order, KWTX, 9/14/17

http://lubbockonline.com/local-news/news/2017-09-13/cattle-company-won-t-move-dairy-facility-panhandle-amid-resident

The Dog Ridge Water Supply Company issued a boil order Thursday for some of its customers.

The order affects customers in the Whispering Hollow subdivision, off FM 1670 and the streets of Whisper Trail and Whisper Hollow Road.

14 Governor tours Austin FEMA Command Center, Fox 7, 9/14/17

http://www.fox7austin.com/news/local-news/governor-tours-austin-fema-command-center

A small army of 2000 emergency response managers with FEMA has set up shop in what was the corporate office for Golfsmith. What's being teed up by the 2000 workers is part of a unified effort to help the communities damaged by Hurricane Harvey. Gov. Greg Abbott was briefed on the recovery work coordinated out of this central location in N Austin.

15 Texas A&M Notification Of Sewage Spill, WTAW, 9/14/17

http://wtaw.com/2017/09/14/texas-notification-sewage-spill/

On Tuesday, September 5, 2017, a sewage line back up caused a spill to occur in a small, isolated area of the Texas A&M University campus in College Station. There is no indication of any resulting problem with local domestic water systems. Immediately upon discovery, Texas A&M notified the City of College Station about the incident, and shortly thereafter notified the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regional office in Waco.

16 Air quality alert issued for New Orleans; sensitive groups urged to avoid outdoor activity, WGNO, 9/14/17

http://wgno.com/2017/09/14/air-quality-alert-issued-for-new-orleans-sensitive-groups-urged-to-avoid-outdoor-activity/

The New Orleans Health Department has issued an Air Quality Alert for New Orleans until midnight tonight, Thursday, Sept. 14. An upper-level ridge of high pressure, warm temperatures and sunny skies will enhance ozone formation allowing pollutants to accumulate.

17 U.S. and Mexico set to sign landmark Colorado River water-sharing deal, Desert Sun, 9/13/17

http://www.desertsun.com/story/news/environment/2017/09/13/u-s-and-mexico-set-sign-landmark-colorado-river-water-sharing-deal/663017001/

The U.S. and Mexican governments are close to signing a landmark Colorado River deal that will establish rules for sharing water over the next decade and lay out cooperative efforts intended to head off severe shortages. Mexican and American officials have scheduled a signing ceremony on Sept. 26 in Ciudad Juárez, officials at California water districts said this week. They said that formal event will be followed by a ceremonial signing in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on Sept. 27 attended by representatives from U.S. states.

18 Local electric car owners express frustration over lack of EV infrastructure in Louisiana, WAFB, 9/14/17

http://www.wafb.com/story/36370415/local-electric-car-owners-express-frustration-over-lack-of-ev-infrastructure-in-louisiana

As of May, there were about 940 electric cars (or EVs) in Louisiana, according to Ann Shaneyfelt, the executive director of Louisiana Clean Fuels. We talked to some local EV owners at an event the organization was hosting in downtown Baton Rouge Thursday to raise awareness about the benefits of electric cars. The EV owners we spoke with say they're pleased with their electric cars but are frustrated with the lack of charging stations in the city and across the state.

19 Owasso Wastewater Treatment Plant kicks off $13M overhaul with engineering approval, Owasso Reporter, 9/14/17

http://www.tulsaworld.com/communities/owasso/news/communitynews/owasso-wastewater-treatment-plant-kicks-off-m-overhaul-with-engineering/article_48f21351-f9af-5786-9b92-7771568cd686.html

Earlier this month, the Owasso Public Works Authority (OPWA) approved engineering services for its Wastewater Treatment Plant and Main Plant Lift Station Expansion Project. The newly passed proposal calls for making improvements to a number of critical systems at the facility due to aged equipment and to accommodate increased usage across the community.

20 Hurricane Harvey flood insurance payouts could top $11 billion, Times Picayune, 9/13/17

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/flood_insurance_losses_from_hu.html#incart_river_index

The head of the National Flood Insurance Program said Wednesday (Sept. 13) that early estimates show Hurricane Harvey will result in about $11 billion in payouts to insured homeowners, mostly in southeast Texas. That would likely put Harvey as the second costliest storm in the history of the program, after more than $16 billion was paid out for Hurricane Katrina.

21 New Orleans mayoral candidates talk flood risk, climate change, Times Picayune, 9/14/17

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/new_orleans_mayoral_candidates.html#incart_river_index

Mayoral candidates promised a complete overhaul of the Sewerage and Water Board at a forum on flooding and adapting to environmental change Thursday (Sept. 14) night. But dumping on perhaps the most hated department of the city was about as far as many candidates got. The mayoral forum was moderated by the director of The Greater New Orleans Water Collaborative, Nathan Lott, and took place at the New Orleans Jazz Market, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard.

22 THREE WAYS TEXAS COULD SAFEGUARD AGAINST TOXIC EMISSIONS DURING THE NEXT MAJOR STORM, 9/13/17

http://www.texasstandard.org/stories/categories/energy-environment/

While we're still a long way from understanding the full environmental impact of Hurricane Harvey, the damage has been done, and experts say Harvey has highlighted inconsistencies in Texas' ability to contain hazardous materials in the face of future storms. The storm was responsible for 600,000 gallons of spilled gasoline statewide, much of it in Houston. More than 7 million pounds of toxic chemicals were released into the air. Rain from Harvey flooded Superfund sites, raising questions about the government response. And explosions and fires at the Arkema chemical plant west of Houston sent more than a dozen first responders to the hospital.

23 Newtron Group, founder commit $1.5 million to Water Campus, Advocate, 9/14/17

http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/business/article_9daa8f3e-9962-11e7-ab95-bb4ccdef99b1.html

The Newtron Group and founder Newton B. Thomas have committed $1.5 million to the Water Campus, a 35-acre science campus on the riverfront downtown. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and its real estate division, Commercial Properties Realty Trust, are building the Water Campus where scientists and engineers can work together to find ways to adapt to climate

change, rising seas and flooding coastlands.

24 Enel brews up Oklahoma wind power agreement with Anheuser-Busch, Oklahoman, 9/14/17

http://newsok.com/enel-brews-up-oklahoma-wind-power-agreement-with-anheuser-busch/article/5563970

Budweiser, this wind is for you. Anheuser-Busch and Enel Green Power said Wednesday they have signed a power agreement for electricity from an under-construction wind farm in northern Oklahoma.

25 Little-known agency integral to hurricane prep, response, Victoria Advocate, 9/15/17

https://www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/2017/sep/14/little-known-agency-integral-to-hurricane-prep-res/

The amount of water flowing down the Guadalupe River in Victoria after Hurricane Harvey is record setting. There was 82,900 cubic feet of water flowing per second Aug. 30, the day the river peaked at 31.25 feet.

region6news

Friday, September 15, 2017

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribal Nations

Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.
To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email R6Press@epa.gov.

Hurricane Response:

1 Independent Monitors Found Benzene Levels After Harvey Six Times Higher Than Guidelines, ProPublica, 9/14/17
http://projects.propublica.org/graphics/harvey-manchester
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7 Harvey's Poorest Victims Will Never Rebuild. They're Getting Evicted, Mother Jones
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10 Lingering threats to health, Houston Chron
http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Lingering-threats-to-health-12199200.php
It took about two weeks for firefighters to start dying from radiation sickness at the Chernobyl nuclear plant. As they rushed into the flames in the Ukrainian morning, the crew didn't know if they were responding to an electrical fire or a core meltdown, nor were they informed about the radioactive threat posed by the debris and smoke. To date, seven firefighter deaths have been attributed to the 1986 disaster - the most recent in 2004, when one of the heads of the fire brigade died from cancer.

11 Planned closure of Houston EPA lab draws protests, Houston Chron
http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Planned-closure-of-Houston-EPA-lab-draws-protests-12199382.php

Conservationists and labor union officials argued Wednesday that the potential closing of the Environmental Protection Agency's regional lab in Houston, which is expected to play a key role in Hurricane Harvey recovery, is among harmful impacts of the Trump administration's drive to slice staff and mission in the agency. The EPA's Region 6 Environmental Services Laboratory, which serves a five-state region, is scheduled for closing when the lease on its rented, 41,000 square-foot space in southwest Houston expires in 2020, officials of the American Federation of Government Employees said they were told.

Around the Region:

12 Highway 84 Landfill opponents, city clash on pollution record of existing landfill, Waco Tribune, 9/15/17
http://www.wacotrib.com/news/city_of_waco/highway-landfill-opponents-city-clash-on-pollution-record-of-existing/article_71108abb-fb01-55e3-97a5-741883db3ec8.html
The campaign against a new landfill off Highway 84 has opened up a new front, as opponents allege that past city mismanagement of the existing landfill next door fouled Lake Waco. In a press release this week, Citizens Against the Highway 84 Landfill cite environmental violations that state regulators found in 2001 and 2003 as evidence that runoff from the landfill polluted Waco's drinking water source.

13 Belton: Dog Ridge Water Supply Corp issues boil order, KWTX, 9/14/17
http://lubbockonline.com/local-news/news/2017-09-13/cattle-company-won-t-move-dairy-facility-panhandle-amid-resident
The Dog Ridge Water Supply Company issued a boil order Thursday for some of its customers. The order affects customers in the Whispering Hollow subdivision, off FM 1670 and the streets of Whisper Trail and Whisper Hollow Road.

14 Governor tours Austin FEMA Command Center, Fox 7, 9/14/17
http://www.fox7austin.com/news/local-news/governor-tours-austin-fema-command-center
A small army of 2000 emergency response managers with FEMA has set up shop in what was the corporate office for Golfsmith. What's being teed up by the 2000 workers is part of a unified effort to help the communities damaged by Hurricane Harvey. Gov. Greg Abbott was briefed on the recovery work coordinated out of this central location in N Austin.

15 Texas A&M Notification Of Sewage Spill, WTAW, 9/14/17
http://wtaw.com/2017/09/14/texas-notification-sewage-spill/
On Tuesday, September 5, 2017, a sewage line back up caused a spill to occur in a small, isolated area of the Texas A&M University campus in College Station. There is no indication of any resulting problem with local domestic water systems. Immediately upon discovery, Texas A&M notified the City of College Station about the incident, and shortly thereafter notified the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regional office in Waco.

16 Air quality alert issued for New Orleans; sensitive groups urged to avoid outdoor activity, WGNO, 9/14/17
http://wgno.com/2017/09/14/air-quality-alert-issued-for-new-orleans-sensitive-groups-urged-to-avoid-outdoor-activity/
The New Orleans Health Department has issued an Air Quality Alert for New Orleans until midnight tonight, Thursday, Sept. 14. An upper-level ridge of high pressure, warm temperatures and sunny skies will enhance ozone formation allowing pollutants to accumulate.

17 U.S. and Mexico set to sign landmark Colorado River water-sharing deal, Desert Sun, 9/13/17
http://www.desertsun.com/story/news/environment/2017/09/13/u-s-and-mexico-set-sign-landmark-colorado-river-water-sharing-deal/663017001/
The U.S. and Mexican governments are close to signing a landmark Colorado River deal that will establish rules for sharing water over the next decade and lay out cooperative efforts intended to head off severe shortages. Mexican and American officials have scheduled a signing ceremony on Sept. 26 in Ciudad Juárez, officials at California water districts said this week. They said that formal event will be followed by a ceremonial signing in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on Sept. 27 attended by representatives from U.S. states.

18 Local electric car owners express frustration over lack of EV infrastructure in Louisiana, WAFB, 9/14/17
http://www.wafb.com/story/36370415/local-electric-car-owners-express-frustration-over-lack-of-ev-infrastructure-in-louisiana
As of May, there were about 940 electric cars (or EVs) in Louisiana, according to Ann Shaneyfelt, the executive director of Louisiana Clean Fuels. We talked to some local EV owners at an event the organization was hosting in downtown Baton Rouge Thursday to raise awareness about the benefits of electric cars. The EV owners we spoke with say they're pleased with their electric cars but are frustrated with the lack of charging stations in the city and across the state.

19 Owasso Wastewater Treatment Plant kicks off $13M overhaul with engineering approval, Owasso Reporter, 9/14/17
http://www.tulsaworld.com/communities/owasso/news/communitynews/owasso-wastewater-treatment-plant-kicks-off-m-overhaul-with-engineering/article_48f21351-f9af-5786-9b92-7771568cd686.html
Earlier this month, the Owasso Public Works Authority (OPWA) approved engineering services for its Wastewater Treatment Plant and Main Plant Lift Station Expansion Project. The newly passed proposal calls for making improvements to a number of critical systems at the facility due to aged equipment and to accommodate increased usage across the community.

20 Hurricane Harvey flood insurance payouts could top $11 billion, Times Picayune, 9/13/17
http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/flood_insurance_losses_from_hu.html#incart_river_index
The head of the National Flood Insurance Program said Wednesday (Sept. 13) that early estimates show Hurricane Harvey will result in about $11 billion in payouts to insured homeowners, mostly in southeast Texas. That would likely put Harvey as the second costliest storm in the history of the program, after more than $16 billion was paid out for Hurricane Katrina.

21 New Orleans mayoral candidates talk flood risk, climate change, Times Picayune, 9/14/17
http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/new_orleans_mayoral_candidates.html#incart_river_index
Mayoral candidates promised a complete overhaul of the Sewerage and Water Board at a forum on flooding and adapting to environmental change Thursday (Sept. 14) night. But dumping on perhaps the most hated department of the city was about as far as many candidates got. The mayoral forum was moderated by the director of The Greater New Orleans Water Collaborative, Nathan Lott, and took place at the New Orleans Jazz Market, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard.

22 THREE WAYS TEXAS COULD SAFEGUARD AGAINST TOXIC EMISSIONS DURING THE NEXT MAJOR STORM, 9/13/17
http://www.texasstandard.org/stories/categories/energy-environment/
While we're still a long way from understanding the full environmental impact of Hurricane Harvey, the damage has been done, and experts say Harvey has highlighted inconsistencies in Texas' ability to contain hazardous materials in the face of future storms. The storm was responsible for 600,000 gallons of spilled gasoline statewide, much of it in

Houston. More than 7 million pounds of toxic chemicals were released into the air. Rain from Harvey flooded Superfund sites, raising questions about the government response. And explosions and fires at the Arkema chemical plant west of Houston sent more than a dozen first responders to the hospital.

23 Newtron Group, founder commit $1.5 million to Water Campus, Advocate, 9/14/17
http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/business/article_9daa8f3e-9962-11e7-ab95-bb4ccdef99b1.html
The Newtron Group and founder Newton B. Thomas have committed $1.5 million to the Water Campus, a 35-acre science campus on the riverfront downtown. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and its real estate division, Commercial Properties Realty Trust, are building the Water Campus where scientists and engineers can work together to find ways to adapt to climate change, rising seas and flooding coastlands.

24 Enel brews up Oklahoma wind power agreement with Anheuser-Busch, Oklahoman, 9/14/17
http://newsok.com/enel-brews-up-oklahoma-wind-power-agreement-with-anheuser-busch/article/5563970
Budweiser, this wind is for you. Anheuser-Busch and Enel Green Power said Wednesday they have signed a power agreement for electricity from an under-construction wind farm in northern Oklahoma.

25 Little-known agency integral to hurricane prep, response, Victoria Advocate, 9/15/17
https://www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/2017/sep/14/little-known-agency-integral-to-hurricane-prep-res/
The amount of water flowing down the Guadalupe River in Victoria after Hurricane Harvey is record setting. There was 82,900 cubic feet of water flowing per second Aug. 30, the day the river peaked at 31.25 feet.

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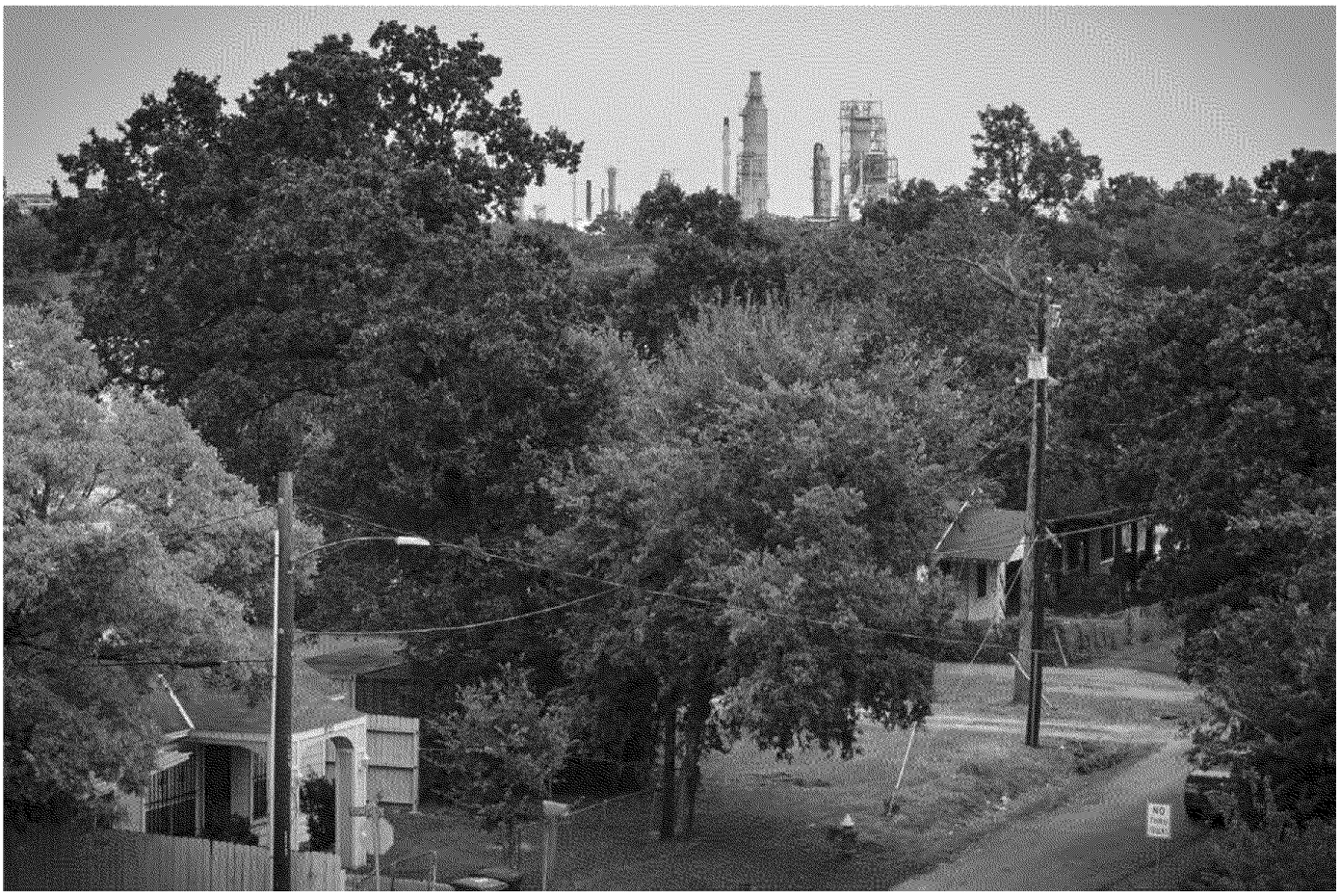


The Valero reinery, seen from across the ship channel in Houston on Wednesday. (Michael Stravato/The Texas Tribune)

Independent Monitors Found Benzene Levels After Harvey Six Times Higher Than Guidelines

After an oil tank in Houston's Manchester neighborhood caved in, private monitors found levels that far exceeded California's health guidelines

By Lisa Song and Al Shaw, ProPublica, and Kiah Collier, The Texas Tribune, Septmber 14, 2017

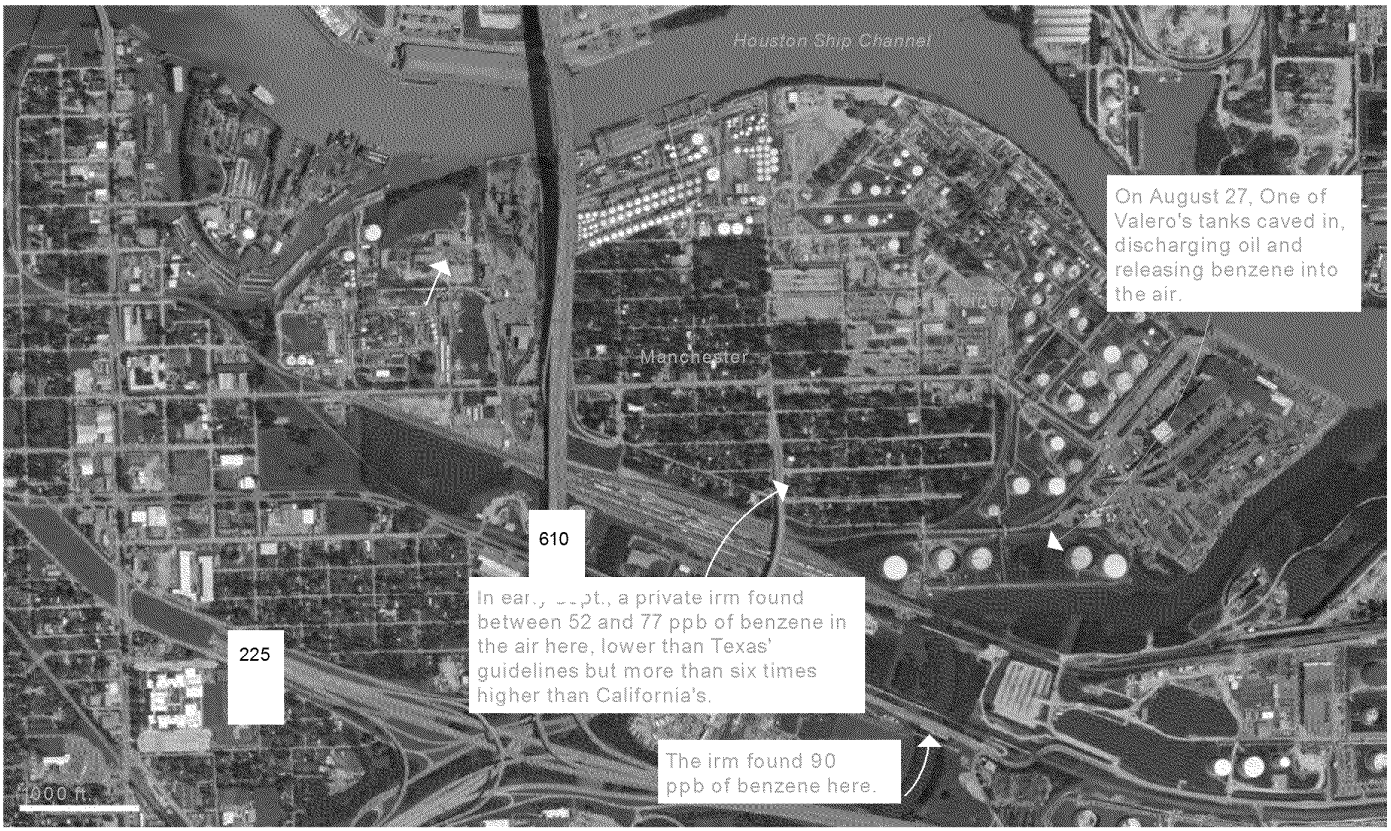
As a longtime resident of Manchester, Guadalupe Hernandez is used to the chemical smells that waft through his southeast Houston, Texas neighborhood, a low-income, predominantly Hispanic community near a Valero Energy refinery. But when Hurricane Harvey blew in the weekend of Aug. 26, the stench became noticeably stronger for about five hours, a scent like "glue or boiled eggs," he said.

The Environmental Protection Agency has assured the public they looked into complaints in the area a week after the storm hit, and spent several days taking air pollution measurements with a mobile laboratory. The agency didn't release any

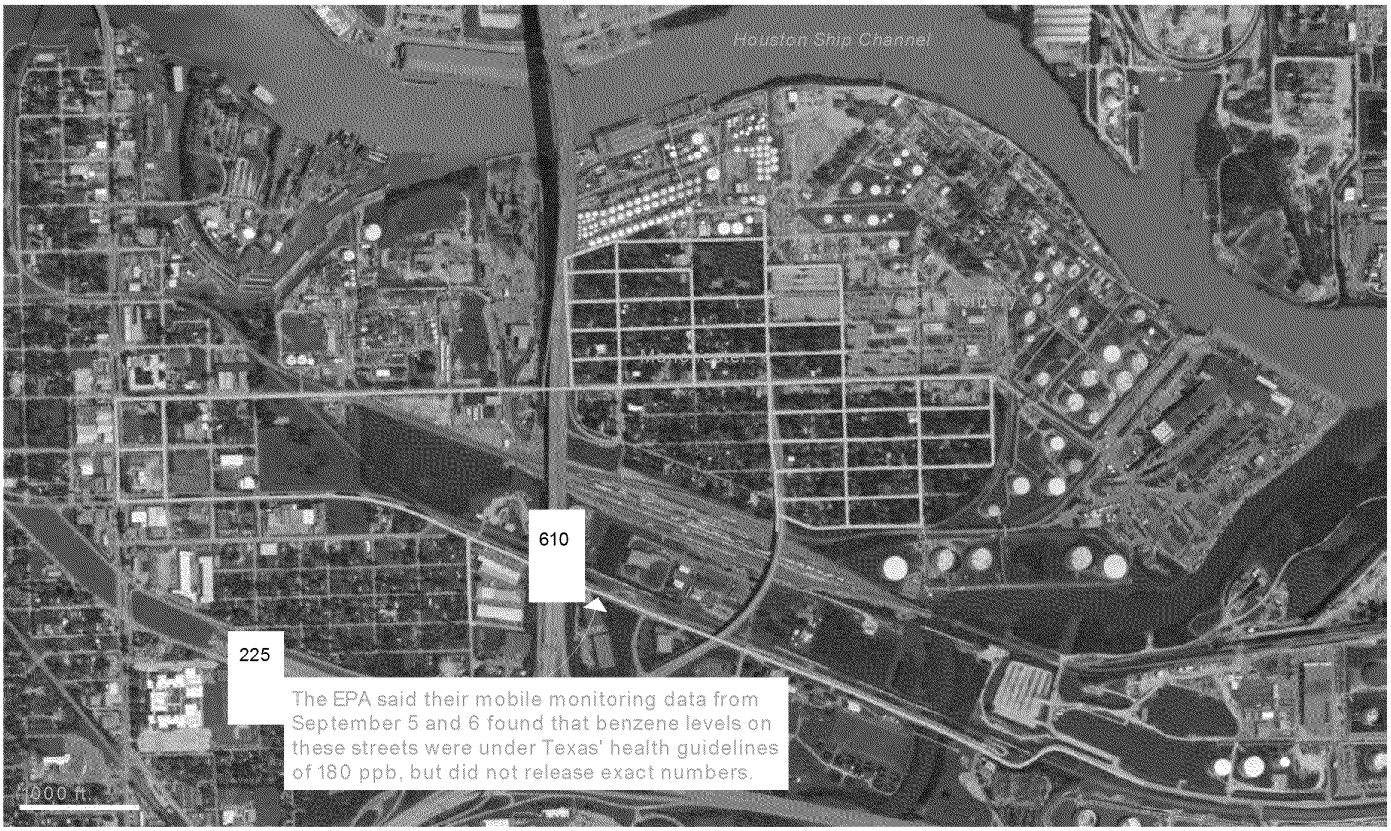
specifics, but said concentrations of several toxic chemicals, including the carcinogen benzene, met Texas health guidelines.

Now, environmental advocacy groups have shared their own, detailed data with ProPublica and the Texas Tribune, based on air sampling from the same Manchester streets over six days. It shows a more nuanced picture than the one given by the EPA: in numerous locations, benzene levels, though under the Texas threshold of 180 parts per billion, far exceeded California's guidelines, which is 23 times more stringent and is well-respected by health advocates nationwide.

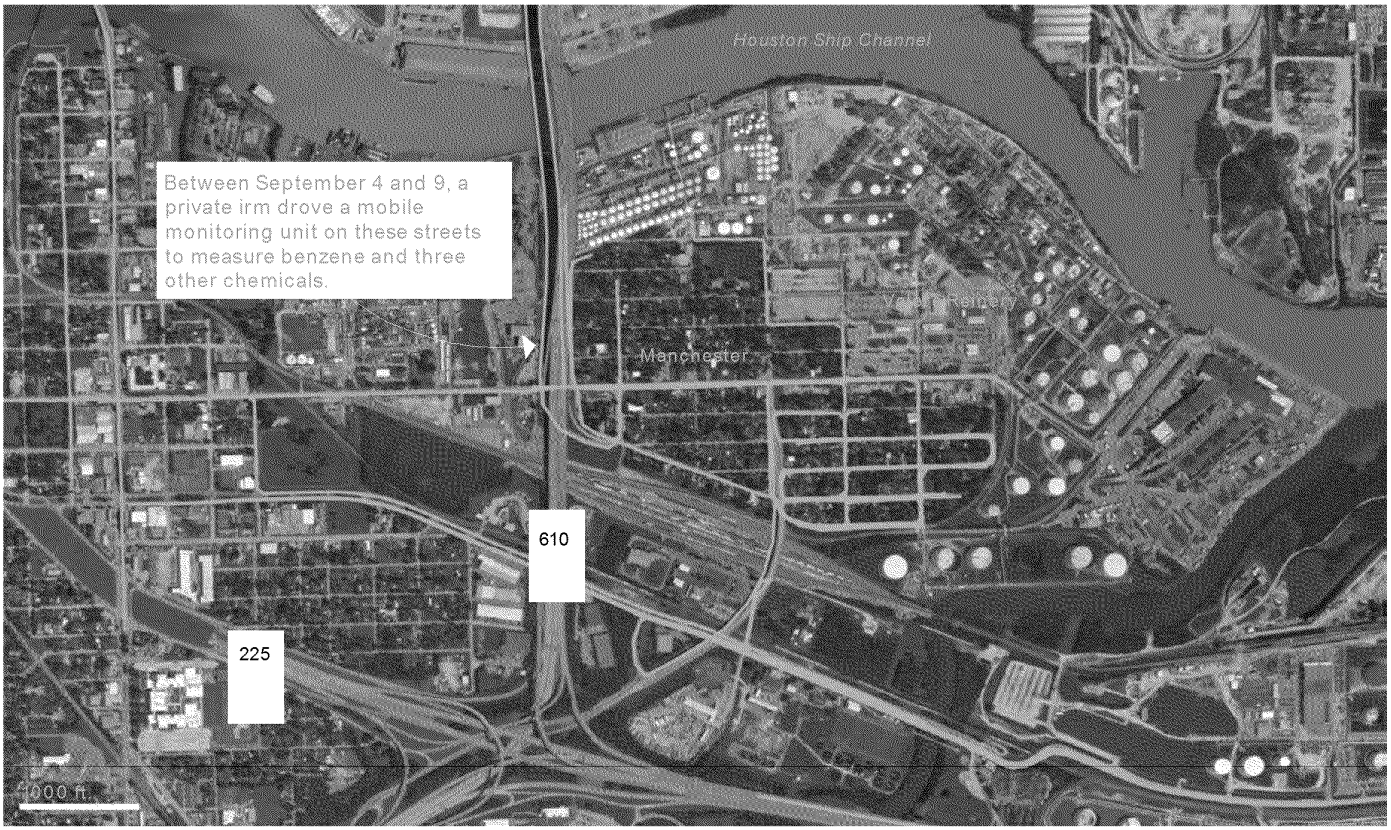
Where a Private Monitoring Firm Found High Benzene Levels Near Valero



Where the EPA Monitored



Where the Private Firm Monitored



About 10 of the benzene measurements exceeded California's limit of 8 ppb. (Neither California's nor Texas' guidelines is legally enforceable; both are thresholds that can trigger regulatory scrutiny).

The readings may not have exceeded Texas' guidelines, but they're still higher than usual, "and they are concerning," said Elena Craft, a senior health scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, which sponsored the monitoring with Air Alliance Houston. "Did we actually capture the highest concentrations that blew into the neighborhood or not? We don't know."

The two highest benzene concentrations, 90 and 77 ppb, were detected within 1,600 feet of a damaged storage tank at the Valero refinery. At the time the data was collected, the wind was blowing from the direction of the tank toward the monitoring sites.

Valero reported on Aug. 27 that the rain from Hurricane Harvey had submerged the tank's floating roof, releasing benzene and crude oil. Satellite images from Aug. 31 released by DigitalGlobe show the caved-in tank at the refinery.

Air pollution experts say much of the benzene would have dissipated by the time the advocates began monitoring on Sept. 4. The EPA started its sampling a day later. Days before either monitoring effort, the city of Houston detected a single benzene concentration of 324 ppb in Manchester.

Hernandez said he believes the fumes he noticed during the hurricane came from the refinery. Margarita Zepeda, another Manchester resident, also remembers a strong smell during the storm.

"During normal rains it would never smell bad but during [the hurricane], it did — chemicals, I guess. And I'm not the only one. All the neighbors" could smell it, too," Zepeda said.

Margarita Zepeda, center, with her mom Teresa, left, and brother Gilberto, right, have lived in the Manchester area of Houston for over 20 years and say the smell, possibly from area reineries, was stronger than usual during Harvey. (Michael Stravato/The Texas Tribune)

The EPA said Thursday that Valero had significantly underestimated the amount of benzene that leaked out, the Houston Chronicle reported . Valero did not respond to a request for comment.

Craft said EDF and Air Alliance Houston decided to take air samples after the hurricane triggered the release of millions of pounds of air pollutants from industrial facilities. They hired Entanglement Technologies, a California-based firm with a mobile monitoring lab, for $20,000, with the bulk of the funds coming from EDF.

"It's resource-intensive to bring folks from California, but we felt the threat was real enough to warrant it," Craft said.

The researchers monitored four different air pollutants, but the focus remains on benzene, a compound so potent that the American Petroleum Institute, a trade group for the oil and gas industry, acknowledged in 1948 "the only absolutely safe concentration ... is zero."

Jill Johnston, an environmental health professor at the University of Southern California who wasn't involved in the monitoring, said because the samples were taken over a period of minutes, it's hard to tell if the elevated levels were brief spikes or

representative of longer-term air quality. If those concentrations persist over days or weeks, then the community would be at much higher risk, she said.

Bakeyah Nelson, executive director of Air Alliance Houston, said the benzene is an added burden for "fenceline" communities near industrial sites that already have higher-than-average rates of asthma, cancer and other illnesses associated with continuous chemical exposures. The eastern side of Manchester, where most of the measurements were taken, is wedged between the refinery, two highways and multiple railroad tracks.

"This is real stuff, this is not theoretical. If you go there and try to breathe you can literally taste the petroleum and gasoline that's in the air," said Mustafa Ali, a former EPA environmental justice official who is now senior vice president of climate, environmental justice and community revitalization at the Hip Hop Caucus.

There are families in these communities who can reach through their backyard fence and touch the piping of the nearest facility, Ali said.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the state environmental regulator, has dozens of stationary air monitors across Texas, but the ones in Harvey-affected areas were temporarily turned off during the storm. That's why mobile, on-the-ground monitoring is so crucial, and the EPA and TCEQ should have "every available unit out there," Craft said.

She was frustrated when TCEQ officials told her in a meeting on Tuesday that a sophisticated TCEQ air monitoring unit—capable of gathering real-time, precise data in the field—has been in Austin since the storm, and wasn't deployed to Houston.

"If not now, when?" she said. "I feel like we've been doing the agency's job."

TCEQ spokeswoman Andrea Morrow did not respond directly to inquiries about the unit, but two other environmental advocates who attended that meeting confirmed TCEQ told them it was sitting in an Austin garage.

Morrow, in an emailed statement, said TCEQ and EPA investigators have used handheld monitoring equipment to survey facility fence lines, and sponsored aerial surveys to spot potential pollutant leaks. She said TCEQ would release its data once it's validated.

The EPA didn't respond to inquiries about the detailed data that came from its Manchester monitoring. The agency has posted maps showing additional monitoring it has conducted in other communities, but not the concentrations it found, only that all levels met Texas guidelines.

Aside from Manchester, Entanglement found another high benzene reading of 76 ppb at an industrial zone in Port Arthur, several miles from a residential area.

Hilton Kelley, a well-known community organizer in Port Arthur, said he noticed "a very pungent odor of sulfur dioxide and other toxic chemicals" during the week

Entanglement was monitoring the air. "It makes your eyes water, it stings your sinuses, and it creates a scratchy feeling in your throat," he said.

The Port Arthur area is a hub of industrial activity including the largest refinery in the United States and a facility that processes petcoke—a byproduct of oil refining.

Since the hurricane, local health concerns have been overshadowed by the more pressing need for housing, as hundreds of residents were evicted from damaged homes, Kelley said. "When your stomach's growling and you're sitting on the curb with three or four kids in the hot-ass sun, pollution is the last thing on your mind."

In the long-term, Kelley said he wants the TCEQ to put continuous air monitors at facility fence lines in Port Arthur. The current TCEQ monitors in Port Arthur only sample benzene once every six days.

Additional GIS work was contributed by Jeremy Goldsmith.

Map Sources: DigitalGlobe, Entanglement Technologies, EPA

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EPA won't release benzene levels collected post-Harvey; private tests show elevated levels

> Environmental groups hired a private firm after the flooding and found higher than normal levels of dangerous chemicals in the air around a refinery.

BY BY KIAH COLLIER, THE TEXAS TRIBUNE, AND LISA SONG AND AL SHAW, PROPUBLICA
SEPT. 14, 2017 17 HOURS AGO

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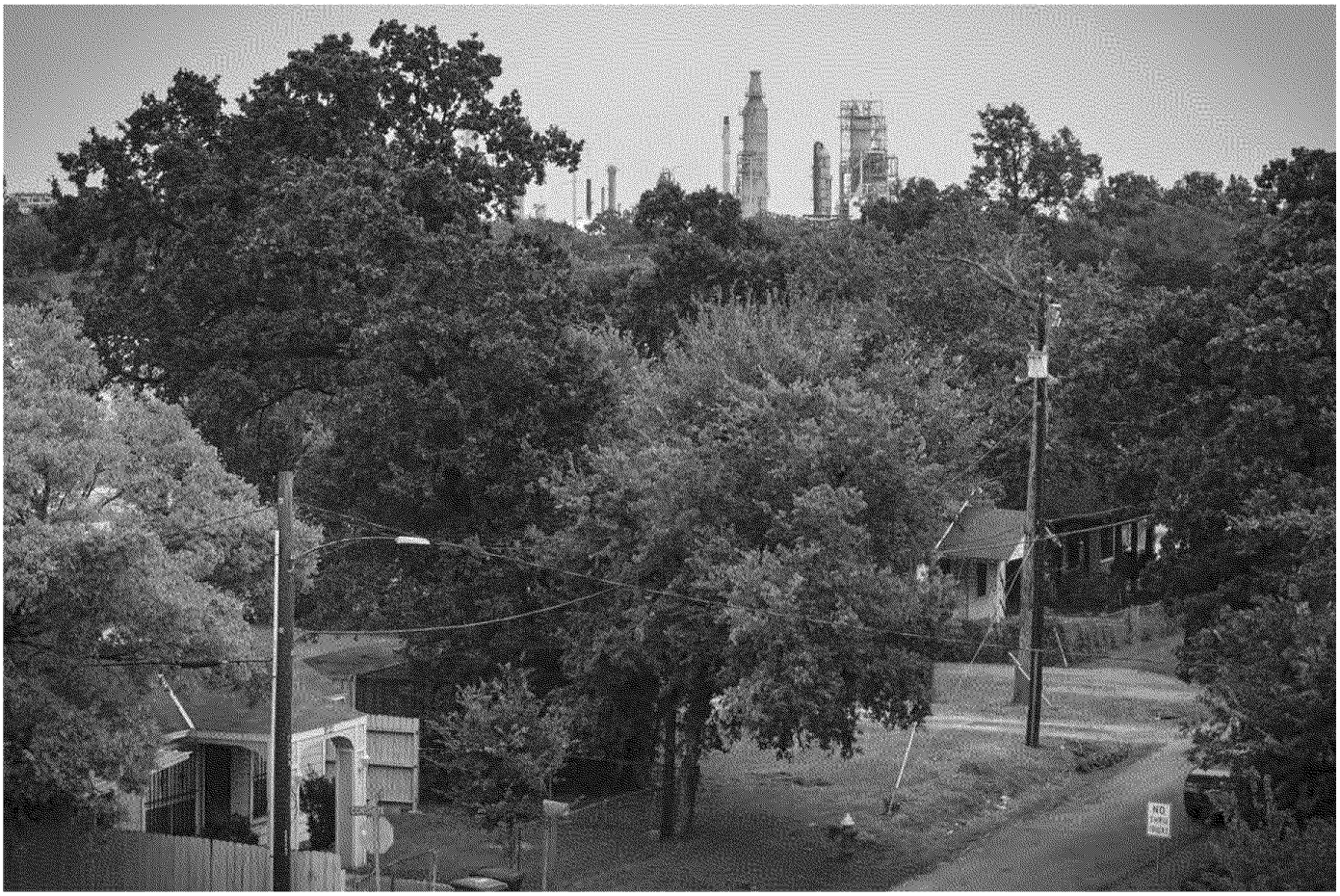

The Valero refinery, seen from across the ship channel in Houston on Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017.
Michael Stravato for The Texas Tribune

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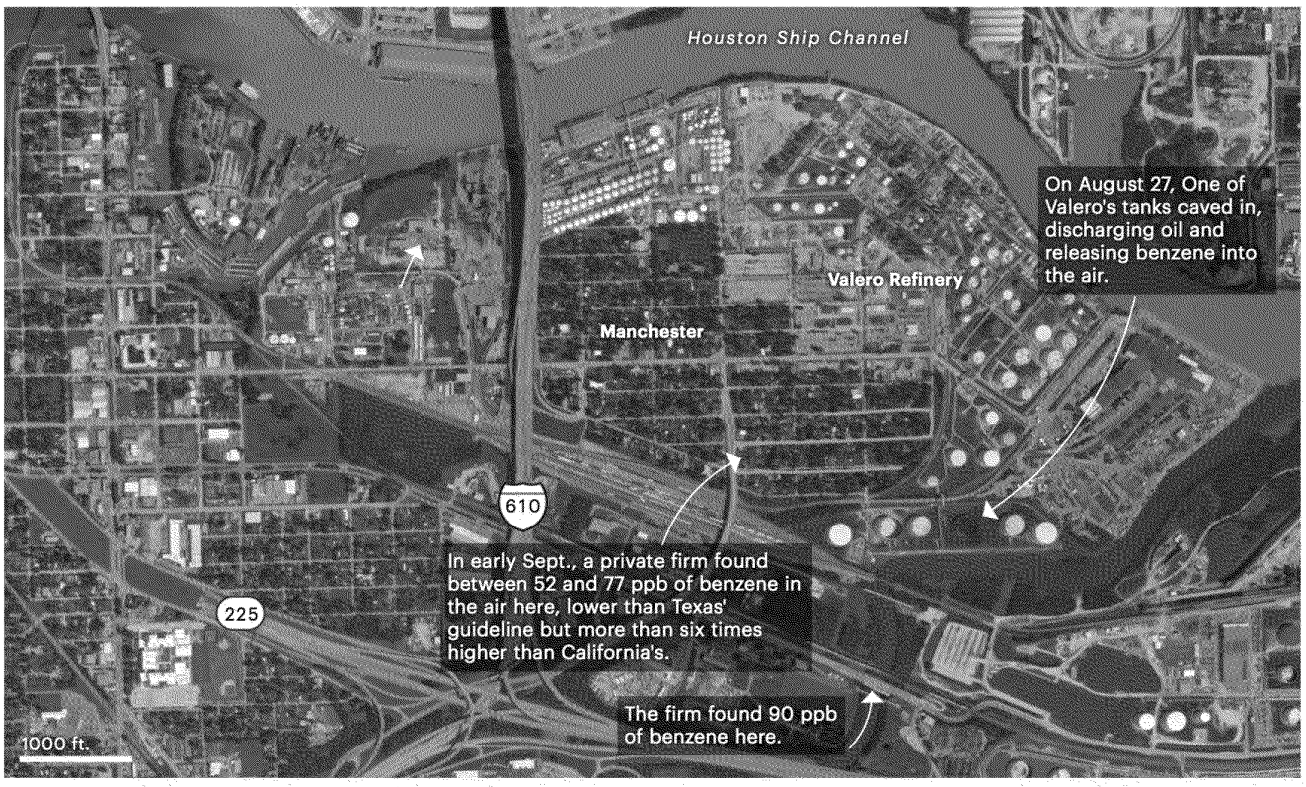

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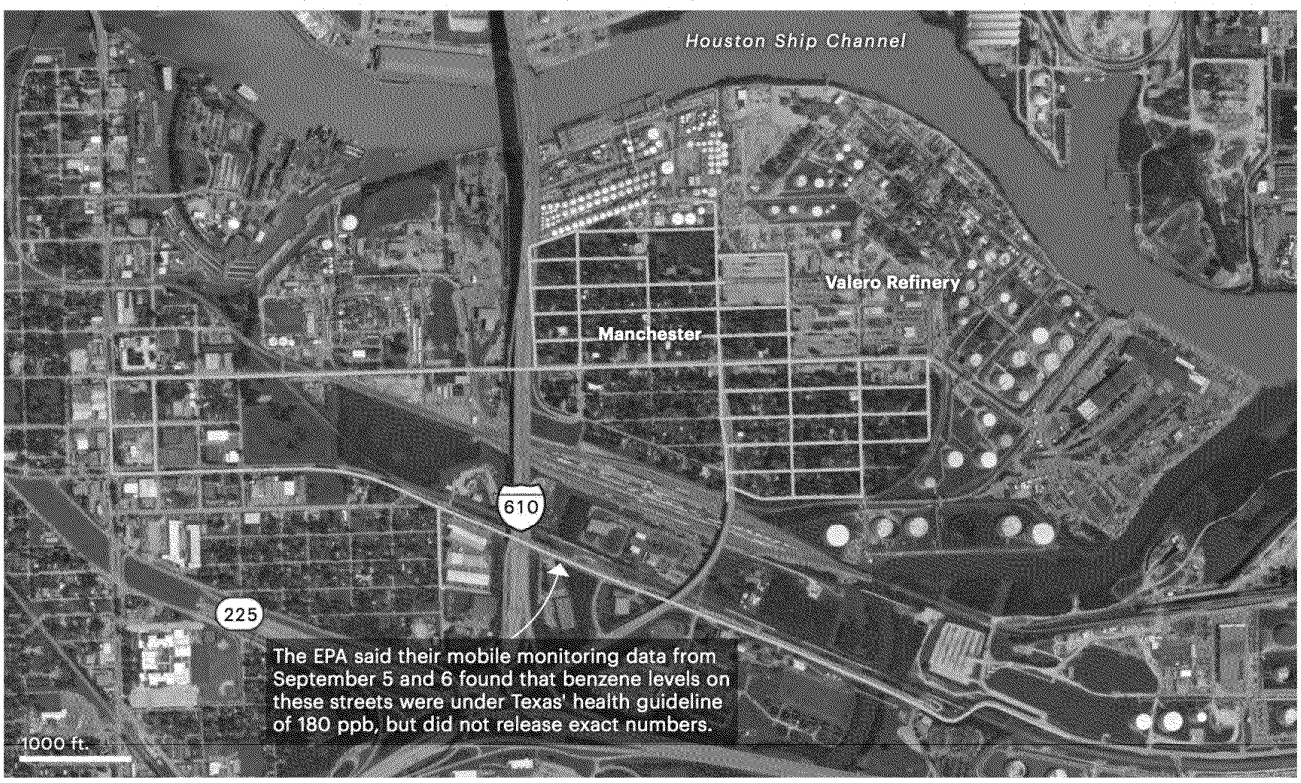

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"During normal rains it would never smell bad but during [the hurricane], it did — chemicals, I guess. And I'm not the only one. All the neighbors" could smell it, too," Zepeda said.

The EPA said in a statement they inspected the refinery last week and were satisfied the company was making the necessary repairs. Valero did not respond to a request for comment.

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Read related Tribune coverage:

- Oil refineries and chemical plants across the Texas Gulf Coast released more than 1 million pounds of dangerous air pollutants in the week after Harvey struck, according to filings. [Full story]
- ExxonMobil acknowledged Tuesday that Hurricane Harvey damaged two of its refineries, causing the release of hazardous pollutants. [Full story]

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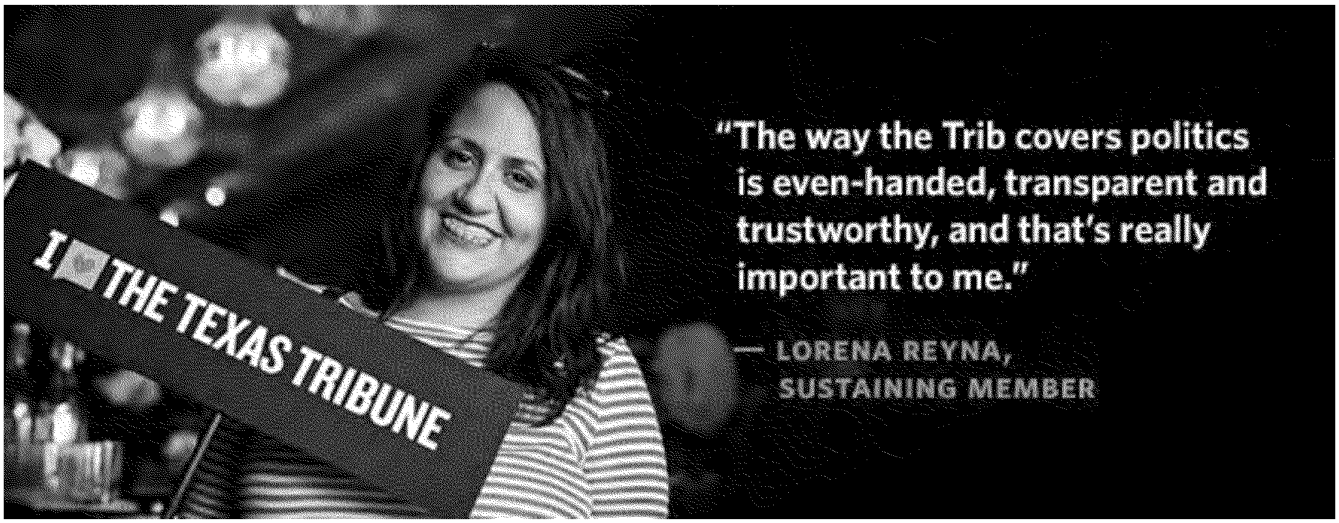
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https://www.wsj.com/articles/valero-houston-plant-underestimated-harvey-benzene-leak-1505432176

U.S.

Valero Houston Plant Underesti Harvey Benzene Leak

Environmental advocates say state should have done more to assess safety of situation sooner

Valero Energy Partners' Houston refinery suffered a hurricane-related spill Aug. 27 from a light crude storage tank, the Environmental Protection Agency said. PHOTO: NICK OXFORD/REUTERS

By Alexandra Berzon
Updated Sept. 15, 2017 12:11 a.m. ET

The chemical plant that released a cloud of a carcinogenic chemical amid Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath in Houston's Manchester neighborhood in August emitted far more of the chemical than it had previously disclosed, environmental regulators said Thursday.

The plant, Valero Energy Partners ' Houston refinery, suffered a hurricane-related spill Aug. 27 from the damaged roof of a light crude storage tank, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concluded in an investigation.

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carcinogenic chemical benzene were released into the air.

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Subsequently, Valero "has informed the EPA that it believes it significantly underestimated the amount of [volatile organic chemicals] and benzene released in its original report to the State of Texas Environmental Electronic Reporting System," a state official said in an emailed statement Thursday.

The state said it didn't yet have the amount the company had underreported.

A spokeswoman for Valero didn't respond to requests for comment Thursday.

The company believes that the emissions were high immediately after the roof failure and diminished over time as the company pumped residual crude material from the tank and assessed how to safely remove the crumpled roof from the tank, according to the state official.

A spokesman for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said Valero hadn't yet filed its final report on the incident, including an explanation of the cause of the damage.

Environmental advocates said the state should have done more to assess the safety of the situation sooner. Plants are supposed to report the highest possible amounts of emissions during unusual events and then revise them lower as more information comes in, said Elena Craft, a scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund who inspected the air around the plant with a mobile unit that came from California.

State air monitoring systems were shut down for several days during the storm. The state began using a specially equipped bus to analyze atmospheric gases on Sept. 5,

DJIA ▲ 22231.89 0.13% S&P 500 ▲ 2497.24 0.06% U.S. 10 Yr ▼ -5/32 Yield 2.206% Euro ▲ 1.1971 0.44%

a state official.

The tests showed air toxin readings below levels of health concern, he said.

Twenty residents from the Manchester area called a city hotline to report disturbing gas odors between Aug. 25 and Aug. 31, which prompted the city to take a reading of the area's air quality on Aug. 31, said Loren Raun, chief scientist for the city of Houston's health department.

While that reading didn't find anything unusual, a subsequent measurement Sept. 2 showed high levels of benzene, which increased in a reading two days later to 325 parts per billion, said Ms. Raun.

According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, amounts of nearly twice that in a 15-minute period can cause acute health effects such as dizziness and headaches. Still, it is unclear how much exposure there was and over what period of time, so the possible effects are difficult to assess, Ms. Raun said.

The benzene levels varied based on the wind and later disappeared, she said.

"The concentrations were concerning," Ms. Raun said. "We really want to make sure the community is protected from benzene at levels like that. "

"We just don't know, and we did have the opportunity to know sooner than we did," said Ms. Craft, whose organization assisted in the city effort.

Other plants outside Houston also had significant outlays of benzene emissions during the storm period.

The environmental group Environment Texas, which tracks emissions reports to the state, said as of Wednesday companies had estimated in initial reports that there were 5.9 million pounds of emissions, primarily from shutdown and startup operations, because of the storm, including 55,000 pounds of benzene and 212,000 pounds of the carcinogen 1,3-butadiene.

That data are likely to be revised as companies update their initial reports in the coming days.

Corrections & Amplifications
Valero's Houston plant underestimated its benzene leak during Hurricane Harvey. An earlier version of the headline on this article incorrectly spelled the chemical as benzine. (Sept. 14, 2017)

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Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition as 'Texas Firm Underestimated Plant Leak.'

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EPA/TCEQ: Updated status of systems affected by Harvey

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EPA/TCEQ: Updated status of systems affected by Harvey

Working together, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality continue to coordinate with local, state and federal officials to address the human health and environmental impacts of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, especially the water systems in the affected areas. The TCEQ has approximately 500 people and EPA has 263 people assisting in response to this natural disaster.

As part of this coordination, a Unified Command was established between the EPA, the TCEQ, the General Land Office, and the U.S. Coast Guard to oversee all emergency response efforts. This Unified Command is supported by three operational branches in Corpus Christi, Houston, and Port Arthur. In addition to the EPA, the TCEQ, the GLO, and the USCG, multiple agencies and groups are supporting each of the operational branches, including the Texas National Guard, 6th Civil Support Team; the Arkansas National Guard, 61st Civil Support Team; the Oklahoma Task Force 1; and the Texas State Guard Engineering Group. Branch personnel are working to continuously monitor water and wastewater systems, as well as assess spills or discharges as a result of the storm.

As of Thursday Sept 14, the following information is available:

Drinking Water: To date, about 2,238 drinking water systems have been affected by Harvey. Of those: 2,014 systems are fully operational, 77 have boil-water notices, and 19 are shut down. Both the EPA and the TCEQ are contacting remaining systems to gather updated information of their status. Assistance teams are in the field working directly with system operators to expedite getting systems back to operational status.

Wastewater and Sewage: The TCEQ has made contact with 1,219 wastewater treatment plants in the 58 counties within the Governor's Disaster Declaration. Of those, 31 are inoperable in the affected counties. The agencies are aware that releases of wastewater from sanitary sewers are occurring as a result of the historic flooding and are actively working to monitor facilities that have reported spills. Additionally, the agencies are conducting outreach and providing technical guidance to all other wastewater facilities in flood-impacted areas. Assistance teams will continue to be deployed to work directly with system operators to expedite getting systems back to operational status.

On September 12, EPA approved the Texas Water Development Board proposed approaches to utilized State Revolving Funds from EPA to address immediate recovery and future resiliency efforts in Texas.

Flood Water: Water quality sampling will be focused on industrial facilities and hazardous waste sites. Floodwaters contain many hazards, including bacteria and other contaminants. Precautions should be taken by anyone involved in cleanup activities or any others who may be exposed to flood waters. These precautions include heeding all warnings from local and state authorities regarding safety advisories. In addition to the

drowning hazards of wading, swimming, or driving in swift floodwaters, these waters can carry large objects that are not always readily visible that can cause injuries to those in the water. Other potential hazards include downed power lines and possible injuries inflicted by animals displaced by the floodwaters.

Critical Water Infrastructure: The TCEQ has made contact with the owners of the 340 dams in the impacted areas. There are 15 dams that have reported some type of damage. There have been no reports of downstream damage or loss of life. The TCEQ will be meeting with affected dam owners in the next week.

Additional EPA/TCEQ updates include:

Superfund Sites: The EPA and the TCEQ continue to get updates about the status of specific sites from the parties responsible for ongoing cleanup of the sites. The TCEQ has completed the assessment of all 17 state Superfund sites in the affected area. There were no major issues noted. The TCEQ will continue to monitor sites to ensure no further action is needed in regards to the storm.

The EPA completed site assessments at all 43 Superfund sites affected by the storm. Of these sites, two (San Jacinto Waste Pits and U.S. Oil Recovery) require additional assessment efforts. Underwater inspections by the EPA Dive Team at the San Jacinto Waste Pits site started this week and are continuing. No final determinations have been made by the Dive Team and their assessment is on-going. Repairs are underway on armored layer of the cap continue. The security cameras have not been restored and repairs are on-going. Yesterday, an EPA On-scene coordinator conducted an inspection of Vince Bayou to follow up on a rumor that material was offsite and did not find any evidence of a black oily discharge or material from the U.S. Oil Recovery site. The responsible party has been directed to sample the water standing in the open tanks and remove the excess storm waters. The responsible party has conducted operations to remove the excess water, and ensure that all materials in the former wastewater treatment tanks is secured.

The EPA or responsible parties have completed sampling the 34 Superfund sites in Texas and will finish sampling the 9 site in Louisiana tomorrow. Post-hurricane Superfund site summaries based on preliminary data results are being released.

Debris Management: The TCEQ, supported by EPA, launched a social media blitz to encourage the separation of debris today. The TCEQ has approved 118 Temporary Debris Management Sites in areas under the Federal or State Disaster Declaration designations. TCEQ regional offices and local authorities are actively overseeing the siting and implementation of debris and waste management plans in the affected area. EPA, TCEQ and Army Corps of Engineer field observers are visiting staging and landfills to ensure compliance with guidelines. View a map of all Temporary Debris Management Sites.

Reconnaissance/Orphan Containers: The TCEQ continues to lead in monitoring facilities that have reported spills. Orphan containers, which include drums and tanks, found floating in or washed up near waterways continue to be gathered, sorted and grouped by type, prior to shipping them off for safe, proper treatment and disposal. Reconnaissance and assessment of facilities and vessels are being conducted to identify any leaks or spills and responded to accordingly. The Unified Command is also working to ensure the disposal of oil and hazardous materials is conducted properly. Response personnel operating out of Corpus Christi are expected to complete their work this week.

Air Quality Monitoring: One of the many preparations for Hurricane Harvey included the EPA, the TCEQ, and other monitoring entities temporarily shutting down several air monitoring stations from the greater Houston, Corpus Christi, and Beaumont areas to protect valuable equipment from storm damage. Since then, state and local authorities have been working to get the systems up and running again as soon as possible. As of Monday, Sept. 11, the TCEQ's air monitoring network is operational 100 percent in Corpus Christi, 96 percent in Houston, and 86 percent in Beaumont. The TCEQ is working to get the complete network fully operational as soon as possible and we will notify the public when the 3 remaining monitors are online. Of the available air monitoring data collected from Aug. 24 through Sept. 14, all measured concentrations were well below levels of health concern. The EPA conducted air monitoring using the TAGA mobile air monitoring bus in southeast Houston neighborhoods nearest industrial sources and data reports for September 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13 are available online at www.epa.gov/hurricane-harvey . EPA has concluded that the probable source of benzene and volatile organic compound readings in the Manchester community in Houston was the roof failure and spill from a light crude storage tank at the Valero Houston Refinery during Hurricane Harvey. EPA investigation into Valero Houston Refinery response and cleanup activities will continue.

Today, TAGA mobile air monitoring bus began monitoring air quality around three additional industrial sources near Deer Park, Texas.

EPA also sent its aerial surveillance aircraft to conduct a screening level assessment to evaluate unreported or undetected releases from facilities with Risk Management and/or Response Plans within the hurricane impacted areas. EPA's plane instrumentation measured 13 chemicals. The Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft found no exceedances of the Texas comparison values. The screening level results from ASPECT were compared to the ASPECT list of the TCEQ's short-term Air Monitoring Comparison Values and found no exceedances of the short-term AMCVs.

Refineries/Fuel Waivers: EPA approved the request from the State of Texas to continue to waive requirements for fuels in Texas through the end of the month to help address the emergency circumstances in Texas from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

For additional information please visit the: https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/hurricanes

View the EPA Story Map about Hurricane Harvey Response activities: https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=12353

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Oil and chemical spills from Hurricane Harvey big, but dwarfed by Katrina

Emily Flitter, Richard Valdmanis

FILE PHOTO: A car dealership is covered by Hurricane Harvey floodwaters near Houston, Texas, U.S. on August 29, 2017. REUTERS/Rick Wilking/File Photo

NEW YORK/BOSTON (Reuters) - More than 22,000 barrels of oil, refined fuels and chemicals spilled at sites across Texas in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, along with millions of cubic feet

of natural gas and hundreds of tons of other toxic substances, a Reuters review of company reports to the U.S. Coast Guard shows.

The spills, clustered around the heart of the U.S. oil industry, together rank among the worst environmental mishaps in the country in years, but fall far short of the roughly 190,000 barrels spilled in Louisiana in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina - the last major storm to take dead aim at the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Harvey slammed ashore in Texas on Aug. 26, unleashing record flooding around Houston that destroyed countless homes, displaced around a million people and killed scores.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warned people affected by the storm to avoid floodwaters, saying they could contain bacteria and other dangerous substances, but the agency has so far provided few details about spills. The EPA said earlier this week it was responding to more than a dozen spills in the wake of Harvey, but said it could not immediately provide volume estimates.

The U.S. Coast Guard reports showed over 22,000 barrels of crude oil, gasoline, diesel, drilling wastewater, and petrochemicals spilled from refineries, storage terminals and other facilities in the days after the storm.

Nearly half of those came from a 10,988-barrel spill of unleaded gasoline from Magellan Midstream Partners' storage facility (MMP.N) in Galena Park, Texas, according to the reports, confirmed by a company official.

"We expect clean-up operations to be completed within a few weeks," the company said in an email on Thursday. Most of the gasoline had been removed, it said, including quantities that spilled offsite and into the Houston Ship Channel, and remaining work was mainly focused on removing contaminated soil.

The Coast Guard filings also showed some 365 tons of toxic chemicals like sulfur dioxide, ammonia, toluene, benzene, and carbon monoxide escaped from facilities during the storm.

In addition, some 27 million cubic feet (765,000 cubic meters) of natural gas, 1,000 tons of asphalt, and unknown quantities of other substances from more than 200 other incidents also

escaped, according to the data.

Officials for the Coast Guard and the EPA did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the filings.

As some spill estimates were preliminary, it was too early to assess pollution damage from the storm, said Tom Pelton, a spokesman for environmental advocacy group the Environmental Integrity Project.

One company is already raising its spill estimates: Valero Energy Corp (VLO.N) told the EPA it probably underestimated the emissions of dangerous chemicals when the roof of a tank at its Houston refinery collapsed in the storm.

Katrina caused 190,000 barrels of oil spills along the Louisiana coastline, according to Donald Davis, the administrator of the Louisiana Applied Oil Spill Research and Development Program, who presented his findings to the EPA in 2006.

Reporting by Emily Flitter and Richard Valdmanis, Editing by Rosalba O'Brien

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Hurricane Harvey floodwaters loaded with E. coli from sewage, fecal bacteria

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NEW ORLEANS, AUGUST 29 A garbage truck makes its way through standing water as New Orleans prepares for flooding from Hurricane Harvey on August 29, 2017 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Today marks 12 yea since Hurricane Katrina made landfall which killed at least 1836 people. (Photo by Chris Graythen/Getty Images)

NEW ORLEANS, AUGUST 29 A garbage truck makes its way through standing water as New Orleans prepares for flooding from Hurricane Harvey on August 29, 2017 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Today marks 12 years since Hurricane Katrina made landfall which killed at least 1836 people. (Photo by Chris Graythen/Getty Images)

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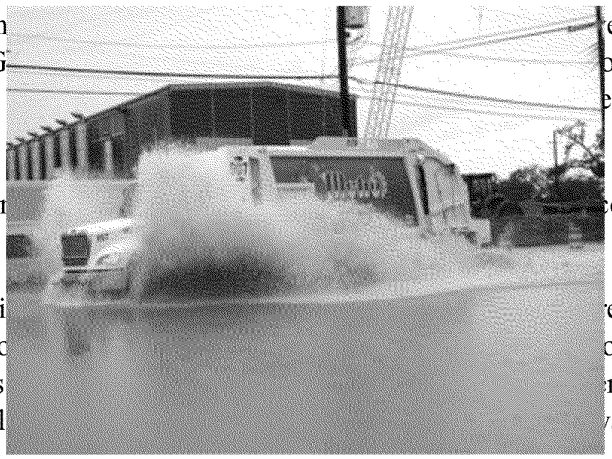

Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath have dumped trillion er six da
Homes, office buildings and other structures along the G oded, t
occupants forced to find higher ground. To reach safety, ams, in
cases for hours.

Scientists, including Lane Voorhies, a senior environmer oncern
what this water might contain.

"The potential for contamination is everywhere," Voorhi espond
particular, he worried about the health effects among pec ose who
have gotten cut while walking through the murky depths n, the el
and young children would also be more susceptible to ill vater.

Based on sampling he'd done during previous flooding events, Voorhies took three samples on Thursday of floodw from different locations in Houston, though all in close proximity. He sent the samples to A&B Environmental Ser Inc. to be laboratory tested for sewage-related bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals, including arsenic, lead, mercu cadmium, chromium and silver.

On Friday, Senthilkumar Sevukan, lab manager and microbiologist at A&B Lab, delivered the results.

Coliform and E. Coli

close

Hearing these numbers, Wilma Subra, president of the Subra Company, an environmental consulting firm, audibly gasped.

"First of all, the drinking water for coliform should be non-detect and here you have these very, very elevated leve said. "These levels indicate the potential for sewer plant malfunction or sewer plant continuing to discharge untrea partially treated waste."

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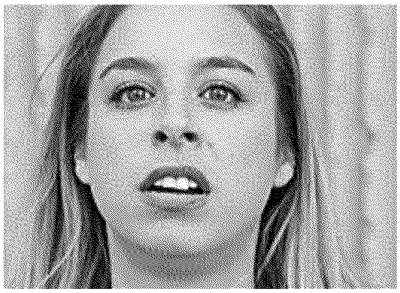

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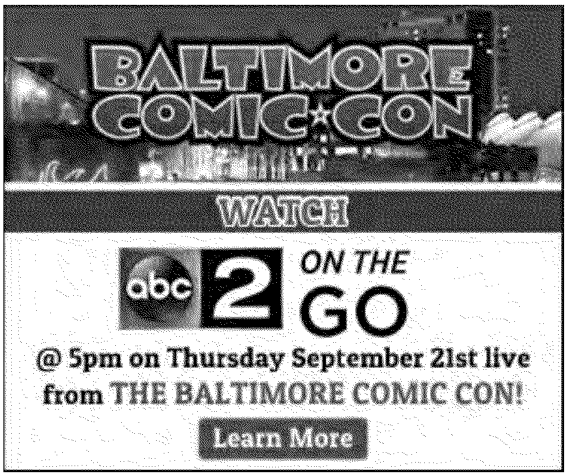

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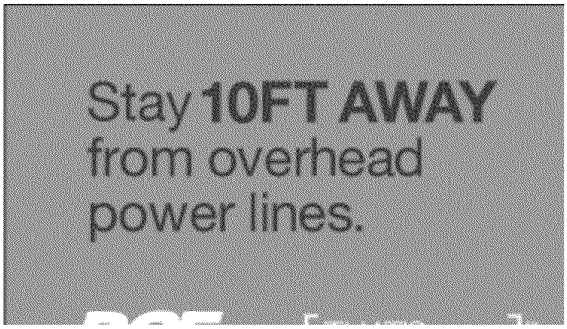

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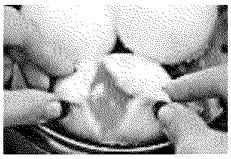
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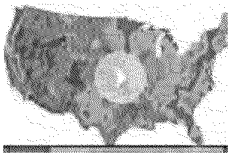
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Mother Jones

Harvey's Poorest Victims Will Never Rebuild. They're Getting Evicted.

Houston's zoning has left them defenseless.

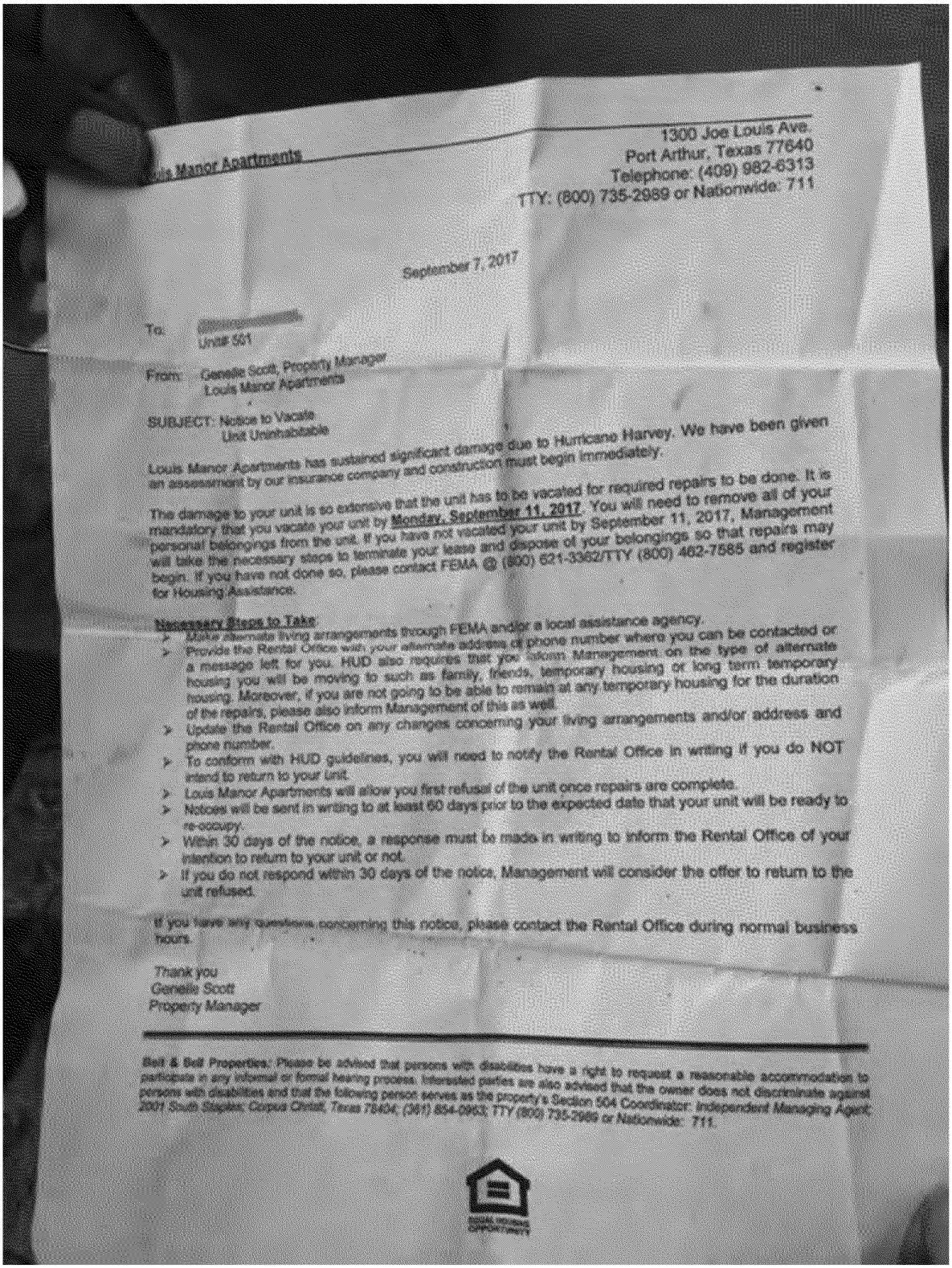
BRENTIN MOCK SEP. 15, 2017 6:00 AM

Matt Rourke/AP

This story was originally published by Climate Desk and appears here as part of the Climate Desk collaboration.

Hilton Kelley has been scrolling through Facebook Live the past few days about families evacuated their homes to escape Hurricane Harvey and are now getting evicted

families live in Port Arthur, Texas, the small Gulf Coast city about 90 mi
are currently scattered across Louisiana and Texas. Kelley himself had to eva
time doing so in the last 15 years due to hurricane flooding—but was able t
home last week. He's now trying to locate as many dispersed families as po
to find out who hasn't come back and why. That's when he found out about the e



uis Manor Apartments

1300 Joe Louis Ave.
Port Arthur, Texas 77640
Telephone: (409) 982-6313
TTY: (800) 735-2989 or Nationwide: 711

September 7, 2017

To: [redacted]
Unit# 501

From: Genelle Scott, Property Manager
Louis Manor Apartments

SUBJECT: Notice to Vacate
Unit Uninhabitable

Louis Manor Apartments has sustained significant damage due to Hurricane Harvey. We have been given an assessment by our insurance company and construction must begin immediately.

The damage to your unit is so extensive that the unit has to be vacated for required repairs to be done. It is mandatory that you vacate your unit by **Monday, September 11, 2017**. You will need to remove all of your personal belongings from the unit. If you have not vacated your unit by September 11, 2017, Management will take the necessary steps to terminate your lease and dispose of your belongings so that repairs may begin. If you have not done so, please contact FEMA @ (800) 621-3362/TTY (800) 462-7585 and register for Housing Assistance.

Necessary Steps to Take:

- Make alternate living arrangements through FEMA and/or a local assistance agency.
- Provide the Rental Office with your alternate address or phone number where you can be contacted or a message left for you. HUD also requires that you inform Management on the type of alternate housing you will be moving to such as family, friends, temporary housing or long term temporary housing. Moreover, if you are not going to be able to remain at any temporary housing for the duration of the repairs, please also inform Management of this as well.
- Update the Rental Office on any changes concerning your living arrangements and/or address and phone number.
- To conform with HUD guidelines, you will need to notify the Rental Office in writing if you do NOT intend to return to your unit.
- Louis Manor Apartments will allow you first refusal of the unit once repairs are complete.
- Notices will be sent in writing to at least 60 days prior to the expected date that your unit will be ready to re-occupy.
- Within 30 days of the notice, a response must be made in writing to inform the Rental Office of your intention to return to your unit or not.
- If you do not respond within 30 days of the notice, Management will consider the offer to return to the unit refused.

If you have any questions concerning this notice, please contact the Rental Office during normal business hours.

Thank you
Genelle Scott
Property Manager

Bell & Bell Properties: Please be advised that persons with disabilities have a right to request a reasonable accommodation to participate in any informal or formal hearing process. Interested parties are also advised that the owner does not discriminate against persons with disabilities and that the following person serves as the property's Section 504 Coordinator: Independent Managing Agent; 2001 South Staples; Corpus Christi, Texas 78404; (361) 854-0963; TTY (800) 735-2989 or Nationwide: 711.

Hilton Kelley

Those kinds of blindsiding evictions are a rootshock that many renter fam know too well, as the same happened for Hurricane Katrina. Plenty of New Orl even get a notice—instead they found out via TV that they would not be ab

homes. This certainly was true for tenants of Fourcity's "Big Four" public housing projects were closed for good during Katrina even though many of them collected no flo

This is the kind of displacement that Kelley fights to help families nonprofit Community In-Power and Development Association (CIDA), which is on behalf of families living under the constant threat of environmental disaster

That doesn't just mean flooding and hurricanes. Port Arthur is with oil refiner petrochemical plants, many of them located within yards of homes, schools, The Carver Terrace public housing projects in Port Arthur were completely surrou poisonous industries before they were torn down just last year, which Kelley had bee petitioning the federal government to do for years. All of Carver Terrace's t relocated, to finally remove them from the clouds of air pollution molest nostrils every day.

That kind of displacement was necessary—requested, even, from the tenants th involuntary kind of displacement, however, that's becoming a more freque Arthur due to heavier and harsher storms, is getting harder for Kelley to weat contemplated for a moment not returning to his home and restaurant that he most recent evacuation from Harvey. He changed his mind only after consideri and how difficult it would be starting over in another city.

"There are sharks out there waiting for us to let loose what we have here and migrate out," says Kelley. "Industries will just engulf this land and the owned. I own property here. When I leave here, I don't own anything in Dalla New York. And I can't imagine trying to buy a restaurant or a home there in t situation."

Displacement like this is increasingly becoming inevitable for peop climate change and extreme weather events, but because of discriminatory p them into unlivable conditions. It's a reality that is rarely confronte out where people can and can't rebuild. But ignoring it likely means that will suffer from the same disparities that have predated recent storm recoverie decades.

The problem of displacement is even more pronounced for Latinos. At the sam Harvey was devastating the land, Trump decided to recall DACA, which put thousa

immigrant children at even greater risk. If Congress approves Trump's reques children will face the kind of relocation that doesn't just send them to ar a detention center, and then to another country that they, in many cases, ha to, if they grew up in the U.S.

Bryan Parras, an organizer with Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (Services), is working a lot these days with Latino families who are bracing for recove and Trump's restrictive immigration policies. Displacement is a threat Latino communities, and their options for sanctuary are growing more li new storms keep gathering in the Gulf.

"That's what disaster does—it really destroys the fabric of a community and t destruction, because it's psychological, it's spiritual, it's cultural," sa that place fires on it. It's been traumatized, so staying doesn't guarantee that maintain those cultural ties to your neighbors."

"There is no true security"

An equitable recovery will be difficult in Houston given that it's not a city of zoning. It's because of that absence of zoning restrictions that pollut i east side of the city, all the way down the Shipping Channel to Port Arthur, along which li heaviest concentration of Latino and African-American families. This is concentration of petrochemical facilities, Superfund sites, toxic overflowing sewers, garbage, incinerators, and landfills located.

"This no-zoning policy has allowed for a somewhat erratic land-use pattern environmental justice scholars Robert Bullard and Beverly Wright, in the 2012 book, The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endange Communities. "Houston's black neighborhoods were unofficially 'zoned' for garbage."

And now that hash of toxic chemicals and trash are spilled across those same r Houston, where black and Latino families have fewer resources for recovery. P officials are telling people to go to touch the floodwaters, particularly in those pl volatile, flammable, and poisonous chemicals have spilled.

These problems were avoidable. Environmental justice advocates had been pe federal government for years to update the chemical disaster risk management. EPA's

program, to better protect families living on the fence line of these refineries a plants. Obama issued an executive order in 2016 requesting the EPA to begin making management program adjustments. However, one of the first orders of business when he took the White House this year was to delay those updates.

Nine months later, families' homes are surrounded by a toxic stew created fro of oil refineries, overflowing sewers, and exploding chemical plants. W toxicology report to see what kind of short-affects long-term spills and explo will have on people's health. Meanwhile, the 29th congressional district communities has been known for a long time as the least number of people with health insurance in the state with the least number of uninsured people.

Not only that, but these families are also living in cities where the and flood management is aged and in disrepair. This only deepens the racia when it comes to exposure to environmental risks and the increased likel New Orleans is a prime example of this—flooding was caused by the levees Katrina twelve years ago, and the climate is sure flooding again just despite the multi-billion dollar reconstruction of those Americans. African Americans in the city ha the hardest time recovering their homes and communities.

"There is no true security—we can, at best, reduce risk, not eliminate it," s based geographer Richard Campanella. "Engineering devices (such as levees and f enabled this delta iccity to become a modern metropolis. But they also ten sense of security. People took for granted that those engineering devices designed. At least twice in the past twelve years, they didn't."

New Orleans' recent flooding was the culpability of a drainage system—one that was considered the "best in the world" a century ago, according to Mark Davis, direct University's Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy. But it was a system th up with the rapid growth and urbanization of New Orleans in the decades fo was true in Houston for Harvey, where flooding on the west side of the city of an inadequate reservoir system that engineers need to fix but had lying in decades ag

"What we're seeing in Texas is a reminder that they could easily have had t hurricane force winds whatsoever," says Davis. "It was a slow moving storm w pressure that essentially [water] rises and it makes it hard for the place

going to have to start thinking in terms of what natural risks we're runn
we're running them for and whether we're being honest with ourselves about
means from an investment and justice standpoint."

Indivisible Houston

Bullard, a noted environmental justice activist and scholar, has been talk
problems since his seminal book, Invisible Houston, published 30 years ago this month. The
"invisible" parts of the city are those black and Latino neighborhoods o
when making decisions about new urban development. These are places where
live not because they chose to, but because of racist policies like redli
these communities could be rendered invisible again during the Harvey rec

"When you start talking about how you are going to rebuild and recover, that
closely because if not it's just going to be a rebuilding on top of inec
today is based in Houston as a professor of urban planning and environmen
Southern University. "If we're not careful, those areas might be rebuilt wi
protections, greening them up with more resiliency, but it will push c
those neighborhoods for a long time—so you get that rebuilding gentrific

The phenomenon Bullard references is called "climate gentrification" in sc
is a major concern for black communities in south Florida, as Irma takes it
seems wrong to give climate change that kind of credit, though. The people
communities are vulnerable to displacement because of the injustices th
any floods and storms. They live in flood-prone communities because of raci
redlining that piloted the segregation still seen today.

As Susan Rogers explained in The Atlantic last year, the Homeowners' Loan
Corporation redlining maps of Houston from the 1930s, "the racism is clearly
areas designated for disinvestment. The maps with the cooler colors (blue, g
to neighborhoods that the HOLC determined were safe for lending. The warmer co
red) were labeled as "declining" or "hazardous" neighborhoods that lenders shou
was one kind of zoning that apparently Houston was willing to live w

Courtesy of Ocite

As it happens, neighborhoods with high concentrations of African American not cool for investment. One of the documents culpable in that redlining Federal Housing Administration's "Planning Profitable Neighborhoods," gui homebuilders, primarily for the suburbs. Writes Rogers:

> The "Planning Profitable Neighborhoods" bulletin describes and illustrat drawings "good" and "bad" development practices. Without fail, these drawi now-typical suburban models of discontinuous streets, large lots, and str and traditional urban typologies fast, "bad" combined policies and practi as "redlining" ensured that central cities, mixed-use areas, and neighborh decline.

That decline didn't only come from the denial of lending and investment i
neighborhoods. It also happened because the models recognized in "good" nei
those "large lots," for example—are what ended up making the city even more
flooding. Besides the city's faulty storm water management, Houston lay fro
urban flooding due to the copious levels of parking lots and impervious
city. So, what was "good" and profitable for sprawl and the suburbs is what al
vulnerability of these redlined neighborhoods, making their designatio
somewhat of a self-sealing premise.

Pinning displacement or gentrification on climate change only absolve
actors who pushed black and Latino families into "hazardous" living cond
That history should not be simply paved over in the recovery.

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Include Superfund site in Harvey relief efforts

Posted: Friday, September 15, 2017 12:00 am

We expect some basic things from government: most people agree that protection from enemies, both foreign and domestic describes one key role. We have spent huge amounts to fight foreign enemies, but combating the problems we face at home does not come easy for Austin or Washington, and our community hurts because of it.

I'm not talking about more funds for firefighters, police, and teachers, though they need it. I'm also not talking about ensuring that we can al find affordable healthcare that gives us comprehensive coverage and does not threaten financial ruin.

I'm talking about the invisible problems that we live with. Poisons emitted by industry to our air, water, and soil that can be controlled in normal conditions but have been made exponentially worse by natural disasters like Hurricane Harvey where they cause harm to our families, reduce our property values, and make us all less healthy and prosperous.

Stop and ask yourself: Should we be surprised that Superfund sites like the San Jacinto Waste Pits flooded during Hurricane Harvey and spread their pollution onto nearby people, the river and the bay?

The storm was predictable and so are the results. Our protection system, the EPA and state regulators, have made decisions over the years that have allowed industry to save money at the cost of putting our community and people at risk. Harvey has made that "hypothetical" risk reality and has poisoned our community.

Rather than sit idly while Washington and Austin continue to let the poisons linger in our water, we should be demanding that these flooded sites be cleaned as a part of the Hurricane Harvey relief effort.

The San Jacinto Pits, containing uncontrolled dioxin (a very toxic and persistent poison) wastes, has been bogged down in a regulatory morass for almost 20 years while the appropriate method of cleanup was studied and debated, and liability for costs was litigated and assigned to the polluters.

During this time, everyone knew that our area, with the San Jac Pits and 40 other Superfund sites, 13 of which that also flooded during Harvey, was likely to experience hurricanes and flooding that could spread the pollution and expose more people to danger. After all, destructive hurricanes hit our coast on average every 15 years.

Congress and our state lawmakers must act now to make protection of the people and cleanup of these vulnerable sites a priority. We must demand that disaster recovery funds be allocated to begin this process immediately. Our lawmakers know that even after a site is designatec a Superfund site, cleanup can take decades.

For sites like the San Jac Pits, waiting for the process to inch along has real life consequences for communities. With immediate attention, cleanup can be accomplished in a few years. Recovering the costs from the polluters can and should take place; but that process is slower and that can be done once the public is protected.

I'm a geologist and an environmental and risk management consultant, so I understand the problem and know the solution.

If our leaders, who are charged with the responsibility of domestic protection, really want to help make America great, they can start by taking immediate steps to resolve the current situation and clean up the mess caused by Harvey.

Just as important, they need to address the likely recurrence of this mess by requiring industry and other parties responsible for the pollution to have realistic and enforceable contingency plans and systems in place where predictable natural hazards can overwhelm protections that would be adequate under normal conditions. That would protect us from serious harm to our people and communities.

We have the opportunity to make it happen, but only if we demand that flooded Superfund sites are included in the Harvey relief efforts. W also must demand that our leaders use this as a learning event where they will modify the requirements on other sites to avoid a similar situation in the future. That is the only way to force our leaders in Washington and Austin to do their job to protect us from domestic problems – problems literally in our own backyard.

Jon Powell is a geologist and former mayor of Taylor Lake Village.

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EDITORIALS

Lingering threats to health

Houstonians have a right to know about the toxic effects of Harvey's floodwaters.

Copyright 2017: Houston Chronicle | September 14, 2017 | Updated: September 14, 2017 7:23pm

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Photo: Mark Mulligan, Staff Photographer

Houston firefighters use a borrowed canoe to search for evacuees during extreme flooding in Meyerland in the wake of Hurricane Harvey on Aug. 27. (Mark Mulligan / Houston Chronicle)

It took about two weeks for firefighters to start dying from radiation sickness at the Chernobyl nuclear plant. As they rushed into the flames in the Ukrainian morning, the crew didn't know if they were responding to an electrical fire or a core meltdown, nor were they informed about the radioactive threat posed by the debris and smoke.

To date, seven firefighter deaths have been attributed to the 1986 disaster - the most recent in 2004, when one of the heads of the fire brigade died from cancer.

First responders to disasters are not only heroes, but often the first victims.

As Houston recovers from Hurricane Harvey, we have to wonder what toxic chemicals and dangerous bacteria are hiding in the muck and have become ticking timebombs to the long-term health of our firefighters, police officers and cleanup crews. Federal, state and local government must ensure that our public servants and volunteers don't succumb to some hidden illness.

We already know that the waters were dangerous.

"Everybody has to consider the floodwater contaminated," Dr. David E. Persse, the chief medical officer of Houston, said after the storm. While area homes are drying out, the floodwaters' toxins may linger. They could settle into sediment, seep into our groundwater, or drain into our bayous, rivers and bays.

In the Clayton Homes public housing development downtown, along the Buffalo Bayou, an analysis paid for by the New York Times found startlingly high levels of E. coli in standing water in one family's living room - levels 135 times those considered safe.

More troubling: The team of scientists found elevated levels of lead, arsenic and other heavy metals.

One volunteer nearly lost his life due to contamination from the floodwaters, as documented by Chronicle reporter Daniela Sternitzky-Di Napoli. J.R. Atkins was

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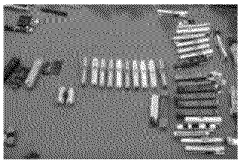

TRANSLATOR

hospitalized with a deadly flesh-eating bacteria after kayaking through floodwaters to check on his neighbors.

Seven first responders are suing Arkema Inc. after being sickened by toxic fumes at the company's facility in Crosby. Communities near Superfund sites, such as the San Jacinto waste pits, are left to wonder if they're putting their lives at risk by trying to clean up their homes.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency and its state counterpart, the Texas Environmental Quality Commission, owe it to the people who are going to be doing the dirty work of rebuilding after Harvey to sample what's in area yards, ditches, water wells and creeks. These environmental agencies have focused their water quality sampling on industrial facilities and hazardous waste sites. That is not enough. These agencies owe it to the many weary and careworn people who are moving back into ravaged homes to conduct more tests on the nature and extent of the contamination throughout the county and to release these results expeditiously. The agencies have a duty to make the public aware of the specific contaminants and any potential long-term hazards.

To read this article in one of Houston's most-spoken languages, click on the button below.

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OUTLOOK

Fleming: Houston deserves a truly democratic recovery from Harvey

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Lingering threats to health

Friday letters: Texas' future and surge protection

Friday letters: DACA, Tragedy Tax, flood worries

So far, they're failing at that task. The EPA has not released specifics about air pollution levels in east Houston after Harvey, according to the Texas Tribune. And in a kick while we're down, the federal agency has also announced plans to shutter its Houston-area regional lab.

Instead, the regulatory burden is being pushed onto Harris County and the city of Houston. Perhaps the EPA and TCEQ missed the headlines, but our local governments have just been hit with more than 50 inches of rain and the budgets of their health departments have been stretched thin.

The Gulf Coast can't be expected to rely on the New York Times to serve as makeshift pollution enforcers. Our environmental agencies must do their jobs.

After the Chernobyl disaster, Soviet citizens were left in the dark about the true dangers they faced. Fatality lists were kept secret, and government denied demands for transparency. The entire crisis became a symbol of the Soviet Union's failures.

As Houston rebuilds, federal and state officials must show that they can keep people safe in the wake of the worst disasters - not only from the immediate threat, but also the dangers that can linger for decades. Houston doesn't need more victims of Harvey.

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Planned closure of Houston EPA lab draws protests

By Bill Lambrecht, San Antonio Express-News | September 14, 2017

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WASHINGTON - Conservationists and labor union officials argued Wednesday that the potential closing of the Environmental Protection Agency's regional lab in Houston, which is expected to play a key role in Hurricane Harvey recovery, is among harmful impacts of the Trump administration's drive to slice staff and mission in the agency.

The EPA's Region 6 Environmental Services Laboratory, which serves a five-state region, is scheduled for closing when the lease on its rented, 41,000 square-foot space in southwest Houston expires in 2020, officials of the American Federation of Government Employees said they were told.

What happens after that, the EPA isn't saying.

The lab employs roughly 50 people, including chemists and biologists. Much of its work has been focused on testing samples from Superfund sites in the region.

In recent days, the lab has been an EPA staging area in the aftermath of Harvey, a scientist at the lab said, adding that employees were told they can expect to do water testing during the recovery.

The potential closing raises the prospect that water or soil samples in the future might need to be sent to another EPA lab or, perhaps, tested by independent contractors. The nearest EPA regional lab is in Ada, Okla., 400 miles from Houston.

At a news conference in Washington called to protest pending EPA cuts, critics said the decision to close the existing lab is ill-advised and would complicate the agency's work in the Gulf region.

"What's in the water coming into my house? The EPA is the agency that everybody is counting on," said the Sierra Club's Mary Anne Hitt, referring to the agency's role after disasters like Harvey.

TRANSLATOR

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John O'Grady, who heads the AFGE section representing EPA employees, called the potential closing "disconcerting." Speaking at the news conference, he added: "We have a laboratory in Houston that is state of the art and is situated directly in an industrial petrochemical complex. And that laboratory is slated for closure. Why? How much money are we going to save with that?"

Clovis Steib, an EPA employee and the union president in the Dallas region, said in an interview that EPA officials told him in April about the decision to close the lab.

"The sobering news given to me was that in 2019 they would start tying together loose ends and in 2020 the facility would close because they are not going to renew the lease. They would shutter it. And people there wonder, of course, what does that mean for me?"

The EPA recently offered buyouts to 12 people at the lab; three of them accepted the packages, Steib said.

Union officials visited offices of Texas members of Congress on Wednesday seeking to build support for keeping the Houston facility open.

In an email, David Gray, the EPA's acting deputy regional administrator for Region 6, acknowledged that that the lease in Houston won't be renewed but disputed the union's conclusions.

"We are looking at alternatives that will continue to provide the analytical services to support our mission critical work in the Dallas office," he said.

As a candidate, President Donald Trump vowed to reduce the EPA to "little tidbits" and early in his administration proposed reducing the agency's budget by 31 percent and cutting staff by one-fourth. Those cuts have since been scaled back by appropriators in Congress, but the reductions likely will be significant.

For years before Trump arrived, discussions took place in Washington about a change in the EPA's approach to managing its 37 laboratories – including ten regional labs – that are housed in 170 buildings in 30 cities.

The Government Accountability Office reported six years ago that the agency had ignored recommendations dating back to the 1990s about the value of consolidating or realigning labs.

Hoping to stave off closure, Houston lab employees intend to give Congress a better understanding of what they have accomplished in recent years.

For instance, they quickly analyzed over 3,000 samples as part of a PCBs removal action at the Old ESCO Manufacturing Superfund site in Greenville, according to reports to EPA headquarters.

The Houston lab analyzed sediment samples collected in surveys of ocean-dredge sites in the Gulf of Mexico, testing for PCBs, pesticide residues and metals, among other pollutants.

For criminal cases in the region, the lab does testing both in the investigative phase and in preparation for prosecution, the report noted.

A lab employee said that the uncertainty about whether workers will have jobs or be offered transfers weighs heavily.

"We just don't know what the future is. The stress level under these circumstances is incredible," said the employee, who requested anonymity because employees are prohibited from speaking to reporters.

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http://www.wacotrib.com/news/city_of_waco/highway-landfill-opponents-city-clash-on-pollution-record-of-existing/article_71108abb-fb01-55e3-97a5-741883db3ec8.html

Highway 84 Landáll opponents, city clash on pollution record of existing landáll

By J.B. SMITH jbsmith@wacotrib.com 14 hrs ago

Workers use heavy equipment to move trash at the Waco Regional Landfill.

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Staff photo — Rod Aydelotte

The campaign against a new landäll off Highway 84 has opened up a new front, as opponents allege that past city mismanagement of the existing landäll next door fouled Lake Waco.

In a press release this week, Citizens Against the Highway 84 Landäll cite environmental violations that state regulators found in 2001 and 2003 as evidence that runoff from the landäll polluted Waco's drinking water source.

City ofäcials say that conclusion is unfounded, and in an ofäcial statement Tuesday city leaders accused the group of resorting to "scare tactics."

Bradford Holland, president of the anti-landäll group, sent out the press release earlier Tuesday in response to an opinion-page interview printed in Sunday's Tribune-Herald, in which Mayor Kyle Deaver said it was "unthinkable" that city staff would recommend a landäll site that would jeopardize Lake Waco.

"The one thing that bothers me most is that they would think our city management would put a landäll in a place where it would damage our water supply," Deaver said in the interview.

"Further, we've operated the site right next to the proposed site on Old Lorena Road all this time successfully. We take all the right measures to avoid that kind of problem."

Weighing few options, more trash: Q&A with Waco leaders on landäll prospects

Holland took issue with the statement, stating "it is clear that the mayor is unaware of the prior contamination of Lake Waco from the landäll at the current site."

"Our group stands behind our evidence that the new landäll site signiäcantly threatens the quality of the drinking water in Waco, despite the Mayor's assertion that everything will be OK," he wrote in the press release. "Given the completely unforeseeable events taking place around Houston with åooding and contamination, the Mayor's line of thinking seems woefully ignorant of the potential for major problems."

At issue are enforcement actions in the early 2000s by the state's environmental agency, now known as the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The city received a penalty of $22,000 in 2002 for a long list of regulatory violations found the prior year, ranging from improper signage and record-keeping to insufäcient slope coverage, leachate management problems and the discharge of

contaminated water from a composting area "into the waters of the state."

In 2004, the city was slapped with an $18,750 penalty for another series of violations, including coverage deäciencies and another "failure to prevent the unauthorized discharge of contaminated water."

City ofäcials don't deny that the landäll had operational problems in the early 2000s that led it to be listed as being in "poor" compliance with state regulations.

Even so, city solid waste director Anna Dunbar said there's no evidence in the TCEQ reports that the 2001 and 2003 incidents resulted in pollution of Lake Waco.

Dunbar knows something about the matter. As regional director of the state environmental agency from 2001 to 2011, she signed the notices of enforcement and authorized the penalties against the city of Waco in 2002 and 2004.

She said "waters of the state" is a broad term that could include a small marsh, a spring, a ditch or a private lake.

In the 2001 incident, an investigation report found water from the compost area ran into a ditch. But Dunbar said it's not clear whether that ditch discharged into Cloice Creek, the tributary that runs from the landäll to the South Bosque River, which feeds Lake Waco.

Silt in stock pond

In the second incident, TCEQ inspector Diane Massey noted that silt from the construction of a new landäll cell had washed into a stock pond of adjacent landowner Barry Gross. The pond is located on a tributary of Cloice Creek, but no mention is made of testing for contamination downstream of the pond.

"In the report, there's a discussion of a cleanup of silt, but nowhere in the report does it say anything about Lake Waco," Dunbar said. "No samples were taken at Lake Waco, and a site visit was not made to Lake Waco."

Dunbar said she trained investigators at that time to sample downstream if there was a suspicion of contamination, but that didn't happen in this case.

The pond and the Gross property have since been sold to the city of Waco and are part of the proposed new landäll site. An April 2017 TCEQ investigation found that the pond was clear and supported a äsh population, and samples showed no contamination.

In a followup email response with the Tribune-Herald, Holland said that the evidence for the contamination of Lake Waco in the early 2000s is sufäcient.

"It should not take water samples with toxic levels of 'substance X' to prove contamination of downstream water sources," he said. "That's simply not the standard in this case. The standard is that contaminated leachate has entered surrounding public/state water, and we have presented proof of that."

Leachate, the contaminated åuids that seep out of piles of trash, is collected at the Waco Regional Landäll by a system of pipes at the bottom of plastic-lined cells and is sent to the city sewer system to be cleaned.

Despite the citations for leachate management issues, Dunbar said there is no indication in the 2001 and 2003 reports that leachate left the landäll site.

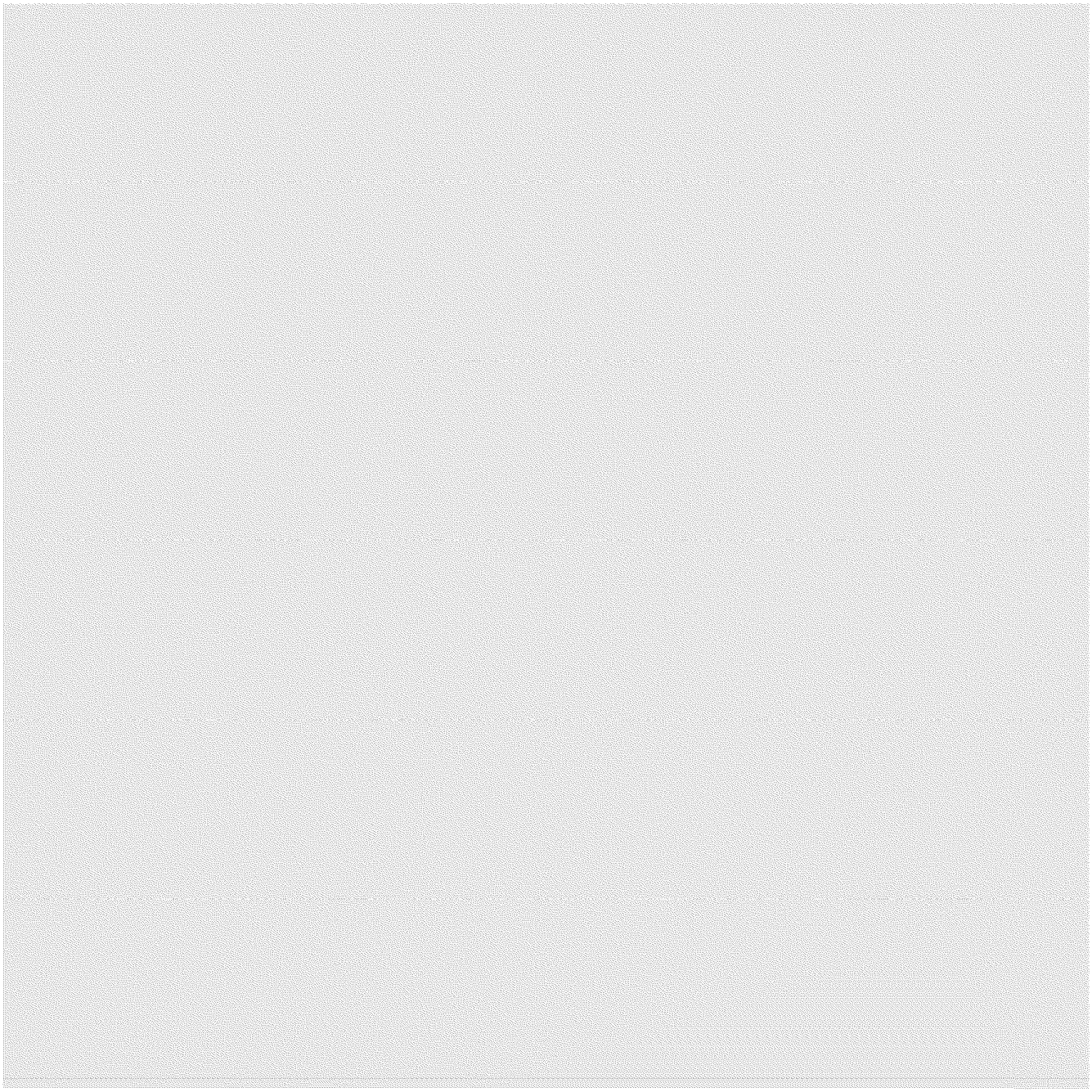
City disputes claims of potential landäll threat to Lake Waco

In his press release, Holland singles out Deputy City Manager Wiley Stem, whose administrative responsibilities included the landäll during the violations recorded in the early 2000s.

“The mayor puts all trust in Wiley Stem, who was the one at the helm when these contamination incidents happened before,” Holland said. “Why the mayor listens to his city staff rather than scientiäc experts armed with facts is mind-boggling.”

Stem said he is proud of the progress the Waco Regional Landäll has made since 2004. The landäll's compliance has been listed as "good" throughout the current decade, and sampling has shown healthy water downstream.

"We've really put a high priority on running a quality landäll, as evidenced by the high aquatic life ratings on the South Bosque," he said.



Trash is moved into place at the Waco Regional Landäll.

Staff photo — Rod Aydelotte

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Belton: Dog Ridge Water Supply Corp issues boil order

(File)

By Staff | Posted: Thu 1:51 PM, Sep 14, 2017 | Updated: Thu 3:12 PM, Sep 14, 2017

BELTON, Texas (KWTX) The Dog Ridge Water Supply Company issued a boil order Thursday for some of its customers.

The order affects customers in the Whispering Hollow subdivision, off FM 1670 and the streets of Whisper Trail and Whisper Hollow Road.

Customers in those areas may experience a loss of water pressure as crews repair a ush valve.

Water intended for consumption, cooking or ice making should be boiled vigorously before use.

Ada, OK: This Brilliant Company Is Disrupting A $200 Billion Industry
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Governor tours Austin FEMA Command Center

Rebuilding after Harvey

By: Rudy Koski (mailto:rudy.koski@foxtv.com?body=http://www.fox7austin.com/news/local-news/governor-tours-austin-fema-command-center)
POSTED: SEP 14 2017 06:18PM CDT
VIDEO POSTED: SEP 14 2017 06:02PM CDT

A small army of 2000 emergency response managers with FEMA has set up shop in what was the corporate office for Golfsmith. What's being teed up by the 2000 workers is part of a unified effort to help the communities damaged by Hurricane Harvey.

Gov. Greg Abbott was briefed on the recovery work coordinated out of this central location in N Austin.

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"This is incredibly impressive, and I'm awestruck by how effective they are and how compassionate they are working to help Texans rebuild," said Abbott.

UP NEXT:

Abbott was joined by Texas A&M Chancellor John Sharp, who heads up the Governor's recovery commission.

The main goal, according to Sharp, is to strengthen lines of communication with local leaders and catch any potential miscues. "Where you really get in trouble, where local governments don't get this paperwork right, then all of a sudden 5 years from now you've got the federal government clawing back money from them, because some previous mayor or previous judge didn't fill out the paperwork right," said Sharp.

Debris removal is among the biggest jobs at hand.

130 debris removal sites have been set up by TCEQ.

It's estimated that 200-million cubic yards will be collected. That's an amount that could fill Kyle Field at Texas A&M 125 times, according to the governor. "It is going fast, but candidly not fast enough," said Abbott.

There was also an assessment on schools.

- 52 campuses are listed as catastrophic
- 234 with significant damage.
- 678 needing some type of repair.

"Over the course of the year, we will be analyzing every issue associated with Harvey, very similar to how we responded from the Ike and Rita to Hurricanes," said Mike Morath with TEA.

38 relief aid distribution centers are opened between Port Aransas and Orange County. 28 shelters, as of Thursday, have 5250 people in them. Innovation is the word that was used to describe the recovery process-especially with providing temporary housing. Providing a fleet of federally purchased trailers, like what was done after Hurricane Katrina, apparently isn't in the works.

"But manufactured housing, and recreational vehicles may be an option that a local government chooses to use, and we are not going to prohibit them from doing that, but we are going to work through our local governments and state agencies as to what's the best solution that takes care of getting folks back into the affected areas, they can get their kids back to school and go back to their jobs and get back to their normal life," said Tony Robinson with FEMA.

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The state General Land Office will also help with the housing problem.

The plan is to use Community Block Grants and it's estimated that more than $50 billion will be needed.

To read the press release from Speaker Joe Straus, click here.

UP NEXT:

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FOX 7 Discussion: Trump's relationship with Democrats

Texas A&M Notification Of Sewage Spill

From Texas A&M:

On Tuesday, September 5, 2017, a sewage line back up caused a spill to occur in a small, isolated area of the Texas A&M University campus in College Station. There is no indication of any resulting problem with local domestic water systems.

Immediately upon discovery, Texas A&M notified the City of College Station about the incident, and shortly thereafter notified the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regional office in Waco.

This incident occurred after an abandoned sewage line that was being backfilled with flowable concrete on a campus construction site spilled into a system manhole and adjoining sewer lines. The blockage was cleared at 2:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 6, 2017. An estimated 200,000 gallons of sanitary sewer effluent flowed into Bee Creek and an estimated 50,000 gallons flowed into White Creek. The affected area was flushed with water from fire hydrants and chlorine powder to disinfect overflow areas.

The TCEQ recommends the following:

• Until further notice, persons using water from private wells (not city/local water) located within 1/2 mile of the spill site (intersection of George Bush Drive and Houston Street) should use only water that has been distilled or boiled at a rolling boil for at least one minute for all personal uses including drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene. Those individuals with private water wells within 1/2 mile of the spill site should have their well water tested and disinfected, if necessary, prior to discontinuing distillation or boiling.

• The public should avoid contact with waste material, soil, or water in the area potentially affected by the spill. If the public comes into contact with waste material, soil, or water potentially affected by the spill, they should bathe and wash clothes thoroughly as soon as possible.

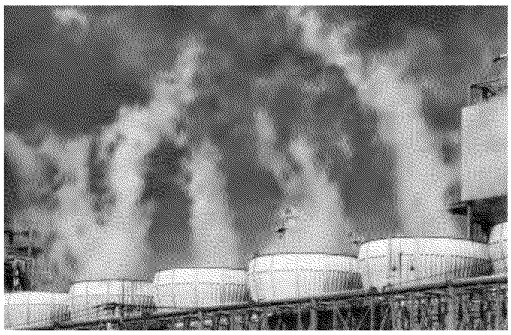
• Persons who purchase water from a public water supply may contact their water supply distributor to determine if the water is safe for personal use.

Short URL: http://wtaw.com/?p=118925

Air quality alert issued for New Orleans; sensitive groups urged to avoid outdoor activity

POSTED 5:56 PM, SEPTEMBER 14, 2017, BYWGNO WEB DESK

NEW ORLEANS—The New Orleans Health Department has issued an Air Quality Alert for New Orleans until midnight tonight, Thursday, Sept. 14.



Smoke comes out of factory chimneys / environment and industry and air pollution, du smog, ×ne dust, Co2

An upper-level ridge of high pressure, warm temperatures and sunny skies will enhance ozone formation allowing pollutants to accumulate.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has raised the Air Quality Index to orange, indicating that the air quality in the afternoon is unhealthy for sensitive groups including active children and adults, the elderly and people with respiratory diseases, such as asthma. These groups should avoid prolonged outdoor activities and exertion.

Residents are encouraged to take the following actions to help reduce the formation of ozone:

- Drive less and make sure your gas cap is tight.
- Refuel your vehicle, mow grass and use gas powered lawn equipment after 6 p.m.
- Postpone work that uses oil based paint, varnishes and solvents that produce Øame.
- Use an electric starter instead of starter Øuid to barbeque.
- Conserve energy in your home.

For more information, clickhere.

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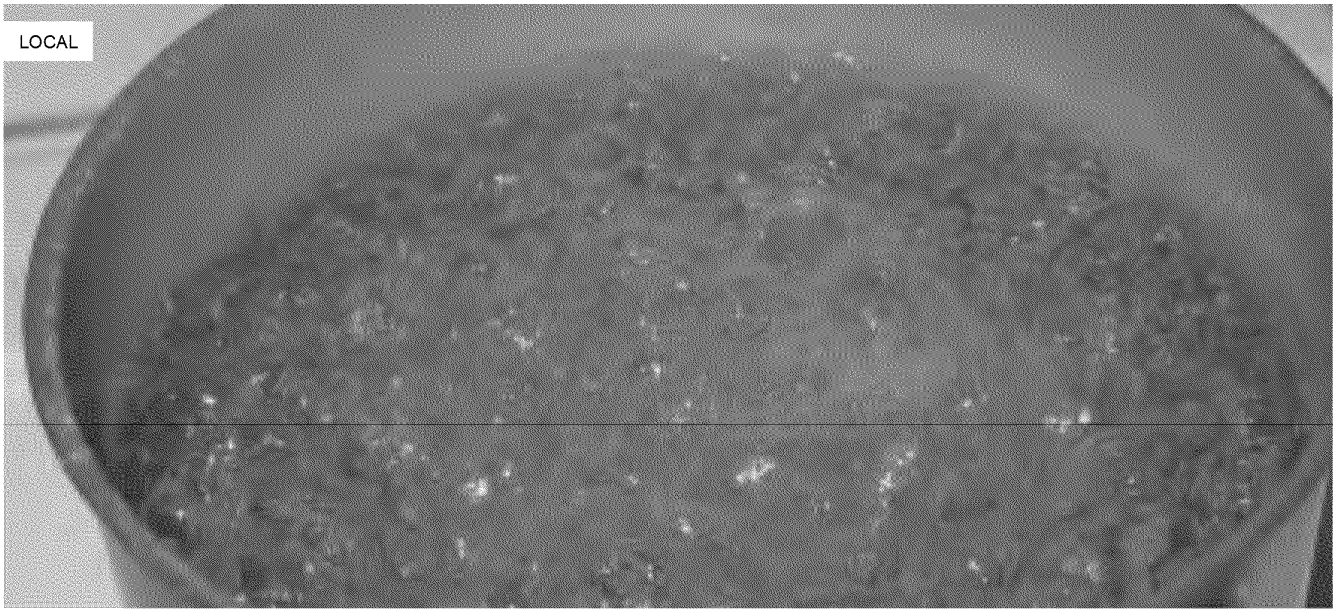

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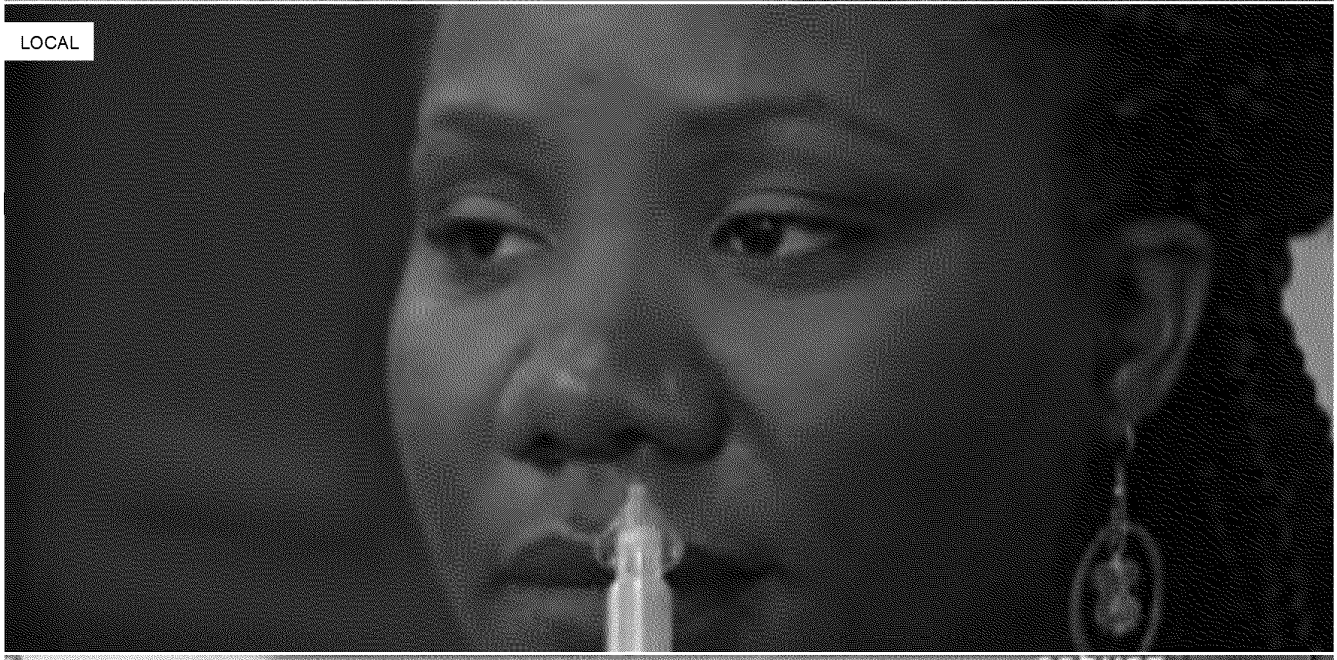
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Local electric car owners express frustration over lack of EV infrastructure in Louisiana

Published: Thursday, September 14th 2017, 5:06 pm CDT
Updated: Thursday, September 14th 2017, 5:53 pm CDT

By Nick Gremillion CONNECT

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) - As of May, there were about 940 electric cars (or EVs) in Louisiana, according to Ann Shaneyfelt, the executive director of Louisiana Clean Fuels.

We talked to some local EV owners at an event the organization was hosting in downtown Baton Rouge Thursday to raise awareness about the benets of electric cars. The EV owners we spoke with say they're pleased with their electric cars but are frustrated with the lack of charging stations in the city and across the state.

Jim Waid leases an all-electric 2016 Nissan Leaf and lives in Walker. He works at home, so he says during the week mainly uses his car to drive his son to and from school in Baton Rouge. On the weekends, he also uses the electric car to drive his family around.

Waid says the best part about owning an electric car is the economic value and its environmental impact. The $400 he used to spend on gas every month for his old vehicle pays for the lease payments on his Nissan Leaf. And charging the car at home only adds about $10-$20 a month to his electric bill.

His vehicle has a range of about 120 miles in on a full battery. But certain variables like driving speed and A/C use can lower that number. The range of the car is Waid's least favorite part. So, for longer trips, his family takes his wife's car which is gas powered.

Katrice Roman lives and works in Baton Rouge and owns an electric 2105 BMW i3. Her car is slightly dierent because it has an electric battery and gas-powered generator that extends the range of the vehicle. The battery alone has a range of about 50-80 miles and the generator adds an additional range of about 80-100 miles.

So, for long drives, like to New Orleans, she lls up the generator's two-gallon gas tank. The generator charges the battery as she is driving. And for even longer trips, BMW oers a mobility plan in which they'll let her use a gas-powered vehicle.

Roman likes the fact her vehicle has low emissions but is frustrated with the lack of parking with electric charge stations in Baton Rouge. She says while there are some charging stations downtown, most of the parking spots are taken up by non-electric vehicles. Waid said he has the same problem when he takes his family downtown on the weekends.

There are currently ten charging stations in downtown Baton Rouge. The EV parking spots contain two charging ports and are located on Lafayette Street by the old state capitol, in the Third Street parking garage, Louisiana Avenue, on Main Street by the Main Street Market, and on Lafayette Street by IBM.

Electric vehicles can be charged with a standard wall outlet, known as a Level 1 charger, and take up to 10-12 hours to fully charge the car battery. Owners can buy a faster charger that uses a 2-10 outlet. Those take about 2-4 hours to fully charge the car battery and can cost upwards of $400-$700.

More powerful Level 3 chargers can fully charge an EV car battery in less than an hour. However, there are currently no Level 3 charging stations in Louisiana. Secretary of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Dr. Chuck Brown told a group of owners at the event that he hopes to bring some to Louisiana through a settlement with Volkswagen and the U.S. Department of Justice.

As part of the settlement, Volkswagen is investing $2.5 million to building fast charging stations in the U.S., according to Dr. Brown. He says he has put Louisiana on the list to receive money to build the fast charge stations from Volkswagen.

During the event, Dr. Brown also spoke to electric car owners about the lack of electric car infrastructure in Louisiana. The LDEQ secretary said he will propose adding an electric vehicle to his department's eet to his fellow board members. He also said he will encourage other state agencies to add at least one electric vehicle to their eet and add charging stations to parking garages.

Electric car drivers can use a variety of apps and websites such as https://www.afdc.energy.gov/locator/stations/ to nd nearby charging stations.

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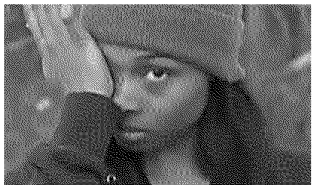

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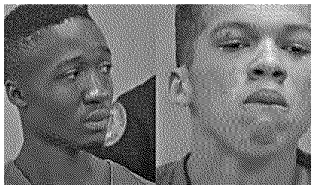

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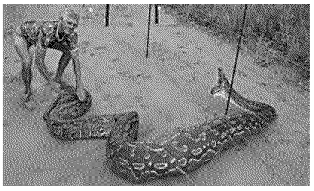

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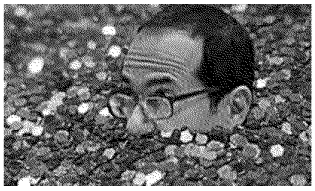

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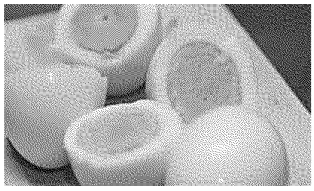

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Owasso Wastewater Treatment Plant kicks off $13M overhaul with engineering approval

By Art Haddaway News Editor 20 hrs ago

The city's wastewater is processed in the aeration basin at the Owasso Wastewater Treatment Plant. ART HADDAWAY/Owasso Reporter

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Earlier this month, the Owasso Public Works Authority (OPWA) approved engineering services for its Wastewater Treatment Plant and Main Plant Lift Station Expansion Project.

The newly passed proposal calls for making improvements to a number of critical systems at the facility due to aged equipment and to accommodate increased usage across the community.

"We do need to upgrade several key assets … to handle the growth that we have today and to handle th growth that we know is coming," said Owasso Public Works Director Roger Stephens.

OPWA provides collection and treatment services for over 12,700 residential, business and industrial customers. The existing system consists of over 167 miles of sanitary sewer line, 10 pump stations and a million-gallon-per-day (MGD) treatment facility.

The new project, which comes on the heels of OPWA's 2014 update to its 12-year-old Wastewater Maste Plan, will see that the department keeps pace with these ongoing wastewater demands of the city.

"It's just to ensure that we have the resources, we have the capacity, to treat the wastewater probably fo the next 10 years," Stephens said. "This (expansion) will give us that ability to do so."

Along with keeping up with regional growth, the purpose of OPWA in carrying out these improvement to continue conducting a safe operation and complying with environmental standards, Stephens said.

"The biggest and most important thing is the ability to treat and (release) a quality effluent downstream, he said. "It's very important that the discharge out of our treatment plant meets, if not exceeds, the ODE and EPA regulations."

The three-year project will be contracted with CP&Y Engineering out of Oklahoma City in the amount o $1,040,000, or 8 percent, of the estimated construction costs totaling $13,058,845.

The scope of the project includes an engineering report, detailed design and specifications, a geotechnica evaluation, a soils exploration, bid assistance, a cost opinion development, a ground survey, record drawings and more.

Wastewater Master Plan immediate needs

• Upgrade main plant pump station: Constructed in 1988, the dry well is beginning to rust and show signs of deterioration. The pumps have also become inefficient due to age.

• Upgrade headworks facility: The headworks equipment is at the end of its useful life and has become ineffective at removing grit, rags and other foreign material.

• Construct second aeration tank: The current aeration tank is approaching the rated capacity for biological oxygen demand (BOD).

• Upgrade existing aeration & equipment: Based on the lifecycle of this particular equipment, it is nearing the end of its useful life.

• Upgrade electrical equipment: In the activated sludge pump station, most of the electrical equipment was installed during the construction of the original plant in 1988.

Editor Art Haddaway

Art is a seasoned reporter of over 15 years with an extended background in writing and editing for a variety of publications and organizations.

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

Hurricane Harvey flood insurance payouts could top $11 billion

1

Updated on September 13, 2017 at 3:36 PM
Posted on September 13, 2017 at 3:34 PM

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By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- The head of the National Flood Insurance Program said Wednesday (Sept. 13) that early estimates show Hurricane Harvey will result in about $11 billion in payouts to insured homeowners, mostly in southeast Texas. That would likely put Harvey as the second costliest storm in the history of the program, after more than $16 billion was paid out for Hurricane Katrina.

It is still too soon to estimate losses from Hurricane Irma, said Roy Wright, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation. But he predicted that Irma damage in Florida and other states could rival the almost $9 billion paid out after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Even before the recent back-to-back hurricanes of Harvey and Irma, the federal flood insurance program was about $25 billion in debt to the U.S. Treasury. Wright said the program currently has enough cash to absorb the initial wave of payments to help homeowners get back on their feet but will need billions of dollars more within about a month.

"Congress has never turned [its] their back on a flood insurance holder, and I cannot imagine [it] looking away now," Wright said. "I am confident there will be no break in the flow of funds."

The Associated Press reported earlier this month that the total number of federal flood insurance policies nationally fell by about 10 percent over the past five years, to about 4.9 million. The drop came after Congress required a premium increase in 2012 and about a half million homeowners elected to drop their coverage.

As a result, scores of homes flooded by Harvey and Irma will not be covered by federal flood insurance. Those uninsured homeowners could seek grants and loans to rebuild. Wright said such federal emergency help should be seen as a life vest, but not the full protection offered by flood insurance.

Wright said that nationally there are about 10 million residential structures, twice the number of properties currently covered, in areas that could flood. That includes many homes that are outside "100-year" flood plains, where a flood is given a 1 percent chance of happening in any year, or that don't have federally-backed mortgages requiring flood insurance.

Uninsured homeowners around the country should learn from what is happening in Houston and other flood-ravaged parts of the country and seriously weigh whether they should buy a policy, he said. "Collectively, we need more people covered," Wright said. "We have to get beyond this conversation about what I have to do and what I'm mandated to do, and put folks in an educated position by which they are making a back-pocket economic decision."

Wright said that under current law, FEMA is not allowed to cancel policies covering waterfront or low-lying homes that have been flooded and rebuilt multiple times. In the wake of Harvey and Irma, he said, the flood insurance program will likely be refining its

policies to allow the owners of such multiple-loss homes to be bought out and moved to higher ground.

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Story by Michael Biesecker.

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LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

New Orleans mayoral candidates talk flood risk, climate change

4

Updated on September 14, 2017 at 9:14 PM
Posted on September 14, 2017 at 8:54 PM

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu signs an executive order Friday, July 7, 2017, that puts into effect his administration's "Climate Action" plan on the "green roof" of the Sewerage and Water Board offices downtown. The plan calls for the city to reduce its environmental emissions 50 percent by 2030.(Greg LaRose, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)

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By Sara Sneath
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

Mayoral candidates promised a complete overhaul of the Sewerage and Water Board at a forum on flooding and adapting to environmental change Thursday (Sept. 14) night. But dumping on perhaps the most hated department of the city was about as far as many candidates got.

The mayoral forum was moderated by the director of The Greater New Orleans Water Collaborative, Nathan Lott, and took place at the New Orleans Jazz Market, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. Eight of the 18 candidates running for mayor showed up to the forum: Michael Bagneris, Ed Bruski, LaToya Cantrell, Desiree Charbonnet, Brandon Dorrington, Troy Henry, Matthew Hill and Johnese Smith.

Most of the candidates at the forum earned knowing chuckles from the audience when describing the poor state of the Sewerage and Water Board. But at least half of the candidates were unable to answer questions about the specifics of re-hauling the city's drainage infrastructure, leveraging state and federal monies for coastal restoration and managing water at a regional level.

By far, the worst performers were Brandon Dorrington and Johnese Smith. Dorrington blew his first impression at the forum when he spent the majority of the time allotted for his first answer discussing how he was given the opportunity to speak before the three female mayoral candidates in attendance, though the candidate order was selected at random before the event began.

Smith spent her allotted answer time for every question digging though loose pieces of paper in front of her, getting lost in her own analogies and repeating that her platform was based on "kingdom building."

Entrepreneur Matthew Hill said his approach to drainage management would include ripping out all of the city's streets and repaving them with permeable plastic with polystyrene, the stuff that packing peanuts are made with, underneath. He did not elaborate on how the city would pay for such an endeavor. While Edward Bruski, a U.S. Air Force veteran and registered nurse, largely piggybacked on the answers of other candidates.

Considered to the city's three major mayoral candidates, former Civil District Judge Michael Bagneris, former Municipal Court Judge Desiree Charbonnet and City Councilwoman LaToya Cantrell, proved themselves to have a better understanding of the issues. Businessman Troy Henry also distinguished himself as a candidate with managerial experience.

Bagneris described the city's issue with infrastructure as a failure to use funding already available, including grant money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "That problem is not one of revenues it's one of fiscal management," he said. The former judge said that before the city can take a regional approach to water management it must first look internally at the issues leading to the Aug. 5 flooding. The city should also take a note from Jefferson Parish in using permeable pavement and retention ponds, he said.

Charbonnet said she would use the City Attorney's Office to identify possible Deepwater Horizon settlement monies to bolster the city's adaption to climate change. But, with a platform largely targeting crime in the city, she seemed to have a difficult time standing out on environmental issues. Councilwoman Cantrell, however, showed a keen understanding of the city's current strategies and how she would improve upon them.

In July, Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced an environmental initiative to curb the city's greenhouse gases 50 percent by the year 2030. Cantrell said she would keep the initiative and build upon it further. She would create an initiative under the Sewage and Water Board to incentivize residents to rip out impermeable concrete on their properties, she said.

The forum ended Thursday night with a final difficult-to-follow speech by Smith. The message was unclear but involved analogies about an ant hill, Willy Wonka's golden ticket and a spaceship.

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Sara Sneath covers Louisiana coastal issues for NOLA.com | The Times Picayune. Reach her at ssneath@nola.com. Follow her on Twitter @SaraSneath.

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By Mose Buchele | September 14, 2017 11:24 am

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From KUT:

While we're still a long way from understanding the full environmental impact of Hurricane Harvey, the damage has been done, and experts say Harvey has highlighted inconsistencies in Texas' ability to contain hazardous materials in the face of future storms.

The storm was responsible for 600,000 gallons of spilled gasoline statewide, much of it in Houston. More than 7 million pounds of toxic chemicals were released into the air. Rain from Harvey flooded Superfund sites, raising questions about the government response. And explosions and fires at the Arkema chemical plant west of Houston sent more than a dozen first responders to the hospital .

What policies could help prevent these things from happening again in the next big storm?

or federal government mandated flood-proofing for fuel storage tanks, it would be “a legal requirement that every company has to follow.”

Cook-Schultz and others say flood-proofing might have been useful in the Arkema plant explosion, as well.

Those chemicals caught fire after refrigeration units were forced offline when backup generators at the plant flooded. So, Cook-Schultz asks, why not mandate that generators be built and positioned in such a way that they won’t flood?

“That’s applicable to almost any chemical plant, and it’s also applicable to nuclear plants,” she says, citing the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in Japan. “Their backup generators failed and were flooded. So, this is a really big deal. We should totally make sure that backup generators are flood-proofed.”

Increased reporting and spill safeguards

The process of fracking and oil production generates contaminated wastewater that Texas companies generally store in pits or pump back underground. But Luke Metzger, the state director of Environment Texas, says they’re not required to report when wastewater spills.

That means we don’t know how much wastewater potentially washed across Texas streets, and potentially into waterways, during the storm.

“That’s different than many other states around the U.S.,” he says. “Who knows what quantities may have been released? We just don’t have that data.”

Other rules he thinks Texas should pick up from other states?

“We can require all new and existing wells to have remote shut-offs, as they require in Colorado,” he says. “Wells can be retrofitted with containment berms that can help control spills.”

"An analogy would be like the cold start of a car," toxicologist Elena Craft told KUT last month. "It would take a while for the engines to heat up to the appropriate temperature to actually burn off some of the pollution."

One thing she says the refining industry could do to improve air quality after such a disaster would be to "stagger" the restarting of chemical plants. It wouldn't reduce the emissions, but it could reduce their concentrations in the air.

Another regulation Craft thinks might have helped mitigate damage at the Arkema plant fire is one that used to be on the books. The updated management rule was put into place after a fertilizer plant in West killed 15 people in 2013, but EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt suspended it earlier this year.

"There were improvements that were made to that rule that he suspended that would have provided additional information to communities, that would have provided additional information to local emergency first responders," she says.

Seven first responders have sued Arkema, saying they were severely injured by fumes from the fires.

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Enel brews up Oklahoma wind power agreement with Anheuser-Busch

by Paul Monies • Published: September 14, 2017 5:00 AM CDT • Updated: September 14, 2017 5:00 AM CDT

Rafael Gonzalez, left, CEO of Enel Green Power North America, and Joao Castro Neves, president and CEO of Anheuser-Busch, toast the announcement Wednesday of a power purchase agreement for the brewer to get electricity from Enel's Thunder Ranch wind project in Oklahoma. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

Budweiser, this wind is for you.

Anheuser-Busch and Enel Green Power said Wednesday they have signed a power agreement for electricity from an under-construction wind farm in northern Oklahoma.

The deal will give Anheuser-Busch 152.5 megawatts of capacity from the 298-megawatt Thunder Ranch wind farm in Garfield, Kay and Noble counties. The $435 million Enel project, which is being constructed in two phases, is expected to be in operation by the end of the year.

The project is the brewer's first large-scale renewable energy deal in the United States and will help its parent company, AB InBev, meet a global pledge to secure all of its electricity from renewable resources by 2025. That goal would be equivalent to taking 500,000 cars off the road each year.

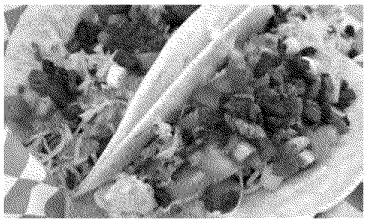
"As we strive to bring people together to build a better world, we at Anheuser-Busch are dedicated to reducing our carbon emissions," said Joao Castro Neves, the company's president and CEO. "Helping to grow the renewable energy market is not only good for the environment, it is a strategic business move as we strive for long-term sustainability."

Enel started construction of the Thunder Ranch wind farm in May. The company already has eight wind farms in operation in Oklahoma and is also building the 300-megawatt Red Dirt wind farm in Kingfisher and Logan counties. Enel will have about 1,700 megawatts of wind capacity in Oklahoma by the end of the year.

More than 400 workers are involved in the construction phase of Thunder Ranch, and the wind farm will have 18 permanent jobs. Enel has not disclosed other customers for the second phase of the project.

Rafael Gonzalez, CEO of Enel Green Power North America, said partnering with global brands like Budweiser and AB InBev shows other customers that Enel is at the forefront of offering customized energy solutions.

from THE NEWSOK HOMEPAGE



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"Enel and A-B are setting an industrywide example of how companies can invest in climate solutions at the same time as improving their business' bottom line," Gonzalez said in a conference call with reporters.

Enel earlier this year signed an agreement with T-Mobile to take 160 megawatts of power from Enel's Red Dirt project. The company also has a power-purchase agreement with Google at a Kansas wind farm.

Corporate power customers

Corporate customers are a fast-growing segment of the wind industry, which traditionally sold electricity to utilities or as merchant generators into a competitive energy market. Last year, corporate and other non-utility customers signed agreements for more than 1,950 megawatts of U.S. wind capacity, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

Low wind prices and the certainty of long-term energy delivery at a fixed cost has attracted corporate customers across the Fortune 500, as well as universities, cities and military installations. Tech companies led the way and continue to be the biggest buyers of renewable energy, but recent deals have included manufacturers and retailers.

"This is something consumers care about," Castro Neves said. "We are doing this because shareholders are asking, stakeholders are asking, because we as a management team believe this is the right thing to do."

Neither Enel nor Anheuser-Busch revealed the price of the wind procured under the power agreement.

Castro Neves called the Enel Thunder Ranch deal a "win-win-win" for Anheuser-Busch. In the past decade, the brewer has cut its water use by 50 percent and lowered its glass, aluminum and paper packaging costs. Since 2008, the company has cut its energy use by 30 percent.

"I think it's great to partner with a company that is investing heavily in the U.S.," Castro Neves said. "It's a win for us, it's a win for nature, it's a win for Enel."

Anheuser-Busch projects it will take 610 gigawatt-hours of electricity each year from the Thunder Ranch wind farm, or as much energy is used to brew 20 billion, 12-ounce beers.

"This announcement shows the trust that these companies show in Oklahoma as an energy leader," Rep. John Pfeiffer, R-Mulhall, said in a statement. "The returns to my district will be felt in the local schools and all the sectors of our local economies."

Enel said it spent more than $2.7 billion on its eight current Oklahoma wind farms, with more than $300 million in local property taxes paid to local communities over their useful lives.

The announcement comes amid uncertainty over the future of state policy on wind projects. Oklahoma lawmakers have ended two major tax incentives for wind.

Gov. Mary Fallin proposed a 0.5 cent per kilowatt-hour tax on wind energy in her budget proposal earlier this year, although the idea didn't get much traction in the regular session. Rep. Mark McBride, R-Moore, has said he plans to introduce legislation for a wind tax that would go toward a pay increase for teachers.

Gonzalez said Enel understands the budget pressures in Oklahoma and the company remains committed to the state and the communities where it has wind farms. But he said any talk of a new tax on wind creates uncertainty for investors.

"There is a good resource in terms of wind," Gonzalez said. "We continue to monitor how the situation is going to go in the coming sessions. There are changes in legislation that could impact business decisions we have to take in terms of investment."

Updates to Oklahoma's alcohol laws are expected to benefit breweries like Anheuser-Busch when they go into effect next year. The company already has about 700 employees in the state.

"From the A-B side, we're very happy with our business in Oklahoma," Castro Neves said. "Everything we've had to do with the state has been very open and we've had very good discussions."

Paul Monies

Paul Monies is an energy reporter for The Oklahoman. He has worked at newspapers in Texas and Missouri and most recently was a data journalist for... read more ›

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Little-known agency integral to hurricane prep, response

By Jessica Priest
Sept. 14, 2017 at 10:06 p.m.
Updated Sept. 15, 2017 at 6 a.m.

The Guadalupe River flows over state Highway 35 and River Road in Tivoli. Houses were flooded near the area.
Ana Ramirez/aramirez@vicad.com for The Victoria Advocate

The amount of water flowing down the Guadalupe River in Victoria after Hurricane Harvey is record setting.

There was 82,900 cubic feet of water flowing per second Aug. 30, the day the river peaked at 31.25 feet.

This is the third-highest water flow recorded.

The first was Oct. 20, 1998, when 466,000 cubic feet of water was flowing down the river per second. That day the river rose to its highest crest ever, 34.04 feet.

The second was July 3, 1936. Then 179,000 cubic feet per second was recorded as the river's discharge and 31.22 feet was its height.

The U.S. Geological Survey operates a nationwide network of more than 8,200 gauges on inland rivers and streams. They provide real-time data that the National Weather Service, FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers and local officials use to determine when to issue flood and evacuation warnings.

"We're kind of like science ninjas. Nobody knows we're even out here," Michael Nyman said of the federal agency, which has about 8,000 employees assigned specifically to work on water.

Nyman was among four who visited Victoria on Aug. 30.

They dropped two devices, an acoustic 9 profiler and an M9, off the Guadalupe River bridge, which police had closed to traffic. The devices looked like little boats a child might tug with a string, but they were much more sophisticated. They calculated the river's discharge in about 12 minutes.

This was brand new technology in 1998 and is a time saver.

Back then, calculating a river's discharge could take several hours. Nyman remembered that well because he was in Victoria then.

He said the USGS didn't use the devices. Instead, they calculated the Guadalupe River's discharge after the water subsided by looking at the high water marks left on structures. This can create an error rate of plus or minus 20 percent.

Nyman also remembered seeing livestock tangled up in treetops.

"You'd usually smell them before you got to them," he said.

Fortunately, he hasn't made such a discovery after Hurricane Harvey.

The USGS also put up dozens of devices to measure the storm surge and the barometric pressure along the coast before the Category 4 hurricane's landfall on Aug. 25. The devices were put up between Packery Channel near Corpus Christi to Matagorda Bay. Some in the Tivoli area were lost to storm surge while another, located near the northeast eye wall of the hurricane, had its antenna rotated to transmit toward the ground instead of the sky.

Nyman said despite his and his colleagues' "science ninja" status, he's excited that people can access the data almost as soon as they need it to help others.

He encouraged people to go to txpub.usgs.gov/water-onthego/.

"When I started, nothing was real time," Nyman said. "When you left a site, you hoped it was going to work for the six weeks that you were gone. Now, it's all telemetered through a satellite system."

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To: Thompson, Steve[thompson.steve@epa.gov]
Cc: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Traylor, Patrick
Sent: Thur 9/14/2017 9:23:53 PM
Subject: RE: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

It's what we expected; open-top WW equalization tanks flooded.

Patrick Traylor

Deputy Assistant Administrator

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(202) 564-5238 (office)

(202) 809-8796 (cell)

From: Thompson, Steve
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 5:15 PM
To: Traylor, Patrick <traylor.patrick@epa.gov>
Cc: Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

See below for a little more information on the tanks associated with the spill. Unfortunately we have not been able to obtain the specific permit through TCEQ's remote document server. The information below is from the 2015 emissions inventory and some documents obtained on TCEQ's server.
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Lundelius, Diana" <Lundelius.Diana@epa.gov>
Date: September 14, 2017 at 3:43:32 PM CDT
To: "Larson, Darrin" <Larson.Darrin@epa.gov>
Cc: "Thompson, Steve" <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

The emission source WWTANKS is the wastewater treatment and filtration system covered

under Permit 6271. Emission sources 14-T-2A and 14-T-2B are wastewater equalization tanks. Minimal emissions are reported for these two tanks (0.0005 tpy VOCs). They are not covered under the permit or under another registration, so they are likely covered under PBR 106.472(2) for wastewater tanks. This PBR does not require registration. However, Permit O1554 does list applicable requirements for these two tanks, and page 15 of the initial version of the Title V permit references these tanks specifically with a letter from TCEQ dated May 14, 1996. Unfortunately, the letter was not found on the TCEQ air documents remote server.

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2A/B
INDUSTRIAL
ARKROSBY INORGANIZATION 1[illegible]
RN[illegible] 80 10 150 E
2A/B

From: Larson, Darrin
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 2:53 PM
To: Lundelius, Diana <Lundelius.Diana@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

Darrin Larson
Chief, Air Permitting Enforcement Section (6EN-AA)

U.S. EPA Region 6

Office: 214-665-7115
Mobile: 972-467-5509

From: Yurk, Jeffrey
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 2:22 PM
To: Larson, Darrin <Larson.Darrin@epa.gov>
Cc: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

To: R6Press[R6Press@epa.gov]
From: Durant, Jennah
Sent: Wed 8/30/2017 3:08:03 PM
Subject: Daily News Digest, Wednesday, August 30
Daily News Digest 083017.pdf

Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.

To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email R6Press@epa.gov.

Hurricane coverage:

1 — As Houston dries out, rescues and recovery continue, Houston Chronicle, 8/30/2017

http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Houston-hunkers-to-Harvey-braces-for-long-storm-12003388.php

Thousands of homes upstream from the Barker and Addicks Reservoirs have flooded after both dams backed up from heavy rainfall. Area residents likely won't be able to return home for several more weeks.

2 — Harvey Makes Landfall In Louisiana As Houston Copes With Record Rainfall, NPR, 8/30/2017

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/30/547227788/harvey-makes-landfall-again-in-louisiana

Tropical Storm Harvey has made landfall again, this time in Louisiana, says the National Hurricane Center, which said at 4 a.m. local time that the storm hit "just west" of Cameron, La.

3 — Shell, Exxon say some pollution released as Harvey hit Texas, CBS, 8/30/2017

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shell-exxon-say-some-pollution-released-as-harvey-hit-texas/

Exxon, Shell and other companies said pollutants have been released from their refineries operated as torrential rains damaged storage tanks and other industrial facilities on the Texas Coast.

4 — Harvey triggers spike in hazardous chemical releases, Politico, 8/29/2017

http://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/29/hurricane-harvey-chemical-danger-242142

Hobbled oil refineries and damaged fuel facilities along the Gulf Coast of Texas from Tropical storm Harvey have released more than two million pounds of dangerous chemicals into the air this week, adding new health threats to Houston's already considerable woes.

5 — Houston's polluted Superfund sites threaten to contaminate floodwaters, Washington Post, 8/29/2017

http://wapo.st/2xxzOmx

The Environmental Protection Agency is prioritizing search and rescue for those who were stranded by the storm, but federal and state environmental agencies in the Houston and Galveston areas may soon face contaminated drinking water and flooded wastewater plants.

6 — Arkema chemical plant faces explosion risk after Harvey floodwaters, Houston Chronicle, 8/29/2017

http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Arkema-chemical-plant-faces-explosion-risk-after-12159448.php

Flood waters from Hurricane Harvey created an emergency situation that could trigger explosions at the Arkema chemical plant northeast of Houston in Crosby. Late Monday night, the facility lost power from both its primary supply and its backup generators due to flooding.

7— Exxon Mobil halts operations at Beaumont refinery, San Antonio Express-News, 8/30/17

http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/energy/article/Exxon-Mobil-closing-Beaumont-refinery-for-Harvey-12160958.php

Exxon Mobil said Wednesday it is shutting down its large Beaumont refinery after Tropical Storm Harvey battered the area Tuesday night.

8— Refineries' toxic gas, Harvey damage, EPA economic reviews, BNA, 8/30/17

https://www.bna.com/first-move-refineries-b73014463854/

Houston's hazardous air pollution has spiked as Hurricane Harvey shuts down refineries and petrochemical complexes. Emergency shutdowns released more than 2 million pounds of harmful pollutants into the air, according to initial reports to Texas regulators.

9 — EDITORIAL: Deadly gumbo and Houton's Katrina: Hurricane Harvey cuts close, Houston Chronicle, 8/29/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Deadly-gumbo-and-Houton-s-Katrina-Hurricane-12159910.php

Stretches of the city are beginning to emerge from the waters, but Houston remains bookended on east and west by two looming catastrophes - the San Jacinto waste pits and the Addicks and Barker Dams.

10 — OPINION: Flooding and the city: The big picture, Houston Chronicle, 8/30/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/Hurricanes-and-flooding-The-larger-picture-going-12159234.php

We're still trying to figure out what Harvey means for the city and the region going forward. But before we ask any questions, let's state a fact as plainly as possible: This is the worst storm the U.S. has ever seen.

11 — OPINION: Will Harvey lead to new thinking about area development?, Houston Chronicle, 8/29/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/columnists/greater-houston/article/Will-Harvey-be-the-storm-that-leads-to-new-12116535.php

We can't make Houston less flat or change its weather, although steps to slow the pace of climate change could make a difference over the long term. What we can do is rethink how and where we build the houses, shopping centers and parking lots that deflect water rather than absorb it.

12 — Southwest Louisiana escapes brunt of Harvey after landfall Wednesday, Baton Rouge Advocate, 8/30/17

http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_d2cb06e2-8d7a-11e7-adc9-e325e02d7101.html

The National Guard and Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office had a quiet night Tuesday, they both said early Wednesday.

Vinton, a town about 20 miles west of Lake Charles, was hit hardest as Tropical Storm Harvey made landfall early Wednesday.

13 — Crude slips, gasoline jumps as storm shuts a fifth of U.S. fuel output, Reuters, 8/29/17

https://in.reuters.com/article/us-global-oil-idINKCN1BA07E

Refineries with output of 4.1 million barrels per day (bpd) were offline on Tuesday, representing 23 percent of U.S. production, Goldman Sachs said. Restarting plants even under the best conditions can take a week or more.

14 — The Looming Consequences of Breathing Mold, The Atlantic, 8/30/17

https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/08/mold-city/538224/

The flooding of Houston is a health catastrophe unfolding publicly in slow motion. The impact of hurricanes on health is not captured in the mortality and morbidity numbers in the days after the rain. This is typified by the inglorious problem of mold.

15 — A battered, isolated Port Aransas picks itself up, San Antonio Express-News, 8/30/17

http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Port-Aransas-now-open-for-cleanup-takes-stock-12159268.php

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Other news:

16 — This miracle weed killer was supposed to save farms. Instead, it's devastating them., Washington Post, 8/29/17

http://wapo.st/2wSqFHZ

Clay Mayes slams on the brakes of his Chevy Silverado and jumps out with the engine running, yelling at a dogwood by the side of the dirt road as if it had said something insulting. Its leaves curl downward and in on themselves like tiny, broken umbrellas. It's the telltale mark of inadvertent exposure to a controversial herbicide called dicamba.

17 — Louisiana fights the sea, and loses, The Economist, 8/29/17

https://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21727099-has-lessons-americas-climate-change-policy-louisiana-fights-sea-and-loses

Coastal erosion is one of America's biggest environmental crises. Louisiana contains some of the world's most extensive wetlands, home to a fifth of North America's waterfowl. It is an economic and human disaster, too. The threatened coastal area is home to 2m people and a hub of the oil-and-gas industry.

18 — Safer approach detailed to reduce nitrogen in plant discharge, Ruidoso (NM) News, 8/29/17

http://www.ruidosonews.com/story/news/local/community/2017/08/29/safer-approach-detailed-reduce-nitrogen-plant-discharge/613749001/

In a continuing effort to improve safety while attempting to meet new stringent federal and state nitrogen standards imposed on the discharge into the Rio Ruidoso of the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, operators of the Ruidoso facility are switching to a new carbon source.

19 — Louisiana coast's insect invader has no taste for sugar cane, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 8/30/17

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/08/insect_invaders_in_south_louis.html#incart_river_index

The plague of insects decimating roseau cane marshes in coastal Louisiana might not be a threat after all to roseau's cash-crop cousin.

region6news

Wednesday, August 30, 2017

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribal Nations

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Hurricane coverage:

1 — As Houston dries out, rescues and recovery continue, Houston Chronicle, 8/30/2017
http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Houston-hunkers-to-Harvey-braces-for-long-storm-12003388.php
Thousands of homes upstream from the Barker and Addicks Reservoirs have flooded after both dams backed up from heavy rainfall. Area residents likely won't be able to return home for several more weeks.

2 — Harvey Makes Landfall In Louisiana As Houston Copes With Record Rainfall, NPR, 8/30/2017
http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/30/547227788/harvey-makes-landfall-again-in-louisiana
Tropical Storm Harvey has made landfall again, this time in Louisiana, says the National Hurricane Center, which said at 4 a.m. local time that the storm hit "just west" of Cameron, La.

3 — Shell, Exxon say some pollution released as Harvey hit Texas, CBS, 8/30/2017
https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shell-exxon-say-some-pollution-released-as-harvey-hit-texas/
Exxon, Shell and other companies said pollutants have been released from their refineries operated as torrential rains damaged storage tanks and other industrial facilities on the Texas Coast.

4 — Harvey triggers spike in hazardous chemical releases, Politico, 8/29/2017
http://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/29/hurricane-harvey-chemical-danger-242142
Hobbled oil refineries and damaged fuel facilities along the Gulf Coast of Texas from Tropical storm Harvey have released more than two million pounds of dangerous chemicals into the air this week, adding new health threats to Houston's already considerable woes.

5 — Houston's polluted Superfund sites threaten to contaminate floodwaters, Washington Post, 8/29/2017
http://wapo.st/2xxzOmx
The Environmental Protection Agency is prioritizing search and rescue for those who were stranded by the storm, but federal and state environmental agencies in the Houston and Galveston areas may soon face contaminated drinking water and flooded wastewater plants.

6 — Arkema chemical plant faces explosion risk after Harvey floodwaters, Houston Chronicle, 8/29/2017
http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Arkema-chemical-plant-faces-explosion-risk-after-12159448.php
Flood waters from Hurricane Harvey created an emergency situation that could trigger explosions at the Arkema chemical plant northeast of Houston in Crosby. Late Monday night, the facility lost power from both its primary supply and its backup generators due to flooding.

7— Exxon Mobil halts operations at Beaumont refinery, San Antonio Express-News, 8/30/17

http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/energy/article/Exxon-Mobil-closing-Beaumont-refinery-for-Harvey-12160958.php
Exxon Mobil said Wednesday it is shutting down its large Beaumont refinery after Tropical Storm Harvey battered the area Tuesday night.

8— Refineries' toxic gas, Harvey damage, EPA economic reviews, BNA, 8/30/17
https://www.bna.com/first-move-refineries-b73014463854/
Houston's hazardous air pollution has spiked as Hurricane Harvey shuts down refineries and petrochemical complexes. Emergency shutdowns released more than 2 million pounds of harmful pollutants into the air, according to initial reports to Texas regulators.

9 — EDITORIAL: Deadly gumbo and Houton's Katrina: Hurricane Harvey cuts close, Houston Chronicle, 8/29/17
http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Deadly-gumbo-and-Houton-s-Katrina-Hurricane-12159910.php
Stretches of the city are beginning to emerge from the waters, but Houston remains bookended on east and west by two looming catastrophes - the San Jacinto waste pits and the Addicks and Barker Dams.

10 — OPINION: Flooding and the city: The big picture, Houston Chronicle, 8/30/17
http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/Hurricanes-and-flooding-The-larger-picture-going-12159234.php
We're still trying to figure out what Harvey means for the city and the region going forward. But before we ask any questions, let's state a fact as plainly as possible: This is the worst storm the U.S. has ever seen.

11 — OPINION: Will Harvey lead to new thinking about area development?, Houston Chronicle, 8/29/17
http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/columnists/greater-houston/article/Will-Harvey-be-the-storm-that-leads-to-new-12116535.php
We can't make Houston less flat or change its weather, although steps to slow the pace of climate change could make a difference over the long term. What we can do is rethink how and where we build the houses, shopping centers and parking lots that deflect water rather than absorb it.

12 — Southwest Louisiana escapes brunt of Harvey after landfall Wednesday, Baton Rouge Advocate, 8/30/17
http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_d2cb06e2-8d7a-11e7-adc9-e325e02d7101.html
The National Guard and Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office had a quiet night Tuesday, they both said early Wednesday. Vinton, a town about 20 miles west of Lake Charles, was hit hardest as Tropical Storm Harvey made landfall early Wednesday.

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19 — Louisiana coast's insect invader has no taste for sugar cane, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 8/30/17
http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/08/insect_invaders_in_south_louis.html#incart_river_index
The plague of insects decimating roseau cane marshes in coastal Louisiana might not be a threat after all to roseau's cash-crop cousin.

As Houston dries out, rescues and recovery continue

Houston Chronicle Staff Updated 8:27 am, Wednesday, August 30, 2017

210

Photo: Yi-Chin Lee, Houston Chronicle

IMAGE 1 OF 192

The historical downtown Galveston is underwater from the rain overnight on Tuesday, August 29, 2017, in Galveston. Some parts of the section were above waist-deep.

8:30 a.m.: Tuesday's weather breaks 122-year record

Tuesday's weather broke a 122-year record for the coldest maximum temperature on Aug. 29 in Houston.

The high on Tuesday was just 75 degrees, following days of record rainfall from Hurricane Harvey, said Kent Prochazka, meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

The previous record of 76 degrees was set in 1895.

Read more from the Chronicle's Margaret Kadifa.

7:30 a.m.: Finally a weather forecast to help a wet city dry out

Houstonians can expect drier weather on Wednesday, after Harvey moved out of southeast Texas and into Louisiana early in the morning, according to the National Weather Service.

Flooded roadways are draining. Water levels on many bayous and creeks are expected to drop.

There is a 30 percent chance of scattered showers and thunderstorms across Harris County, said NWS meteorologist Kent Prochazka.

Those showers and thunderstorms are more likely to hit in the afternoon, Prochazka added.

Because of existing high water on creek, river and roads, a flash flood warning is in effect until 10:15 a.m. for Harris, Galveston, southern Montgomery, Fort Bend, southern San Jacinto, Chambers, Brazoria, southeastern Waller, Liberty and southern Polk counties.

6:50 a.m.: Buffalo Bayou water levels hold in some places

Water levels are no longer rising on Buffalo Bayou between State 6 and Dairy Ashford and from San Felipe downstream to the Ship Channel, according to Jeff Lindner, meteorologist with the Harris County Flood Control District.

Levels on the bayou between Dairy Ashford and San Felipe are still on the rise. The bayou could be another 3 feet higher by the end of Wednesday.

NOW
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the two-way

AMERICA

Harvey Makes Landfall In Louisiana As Houston Copes With Record Rainfall

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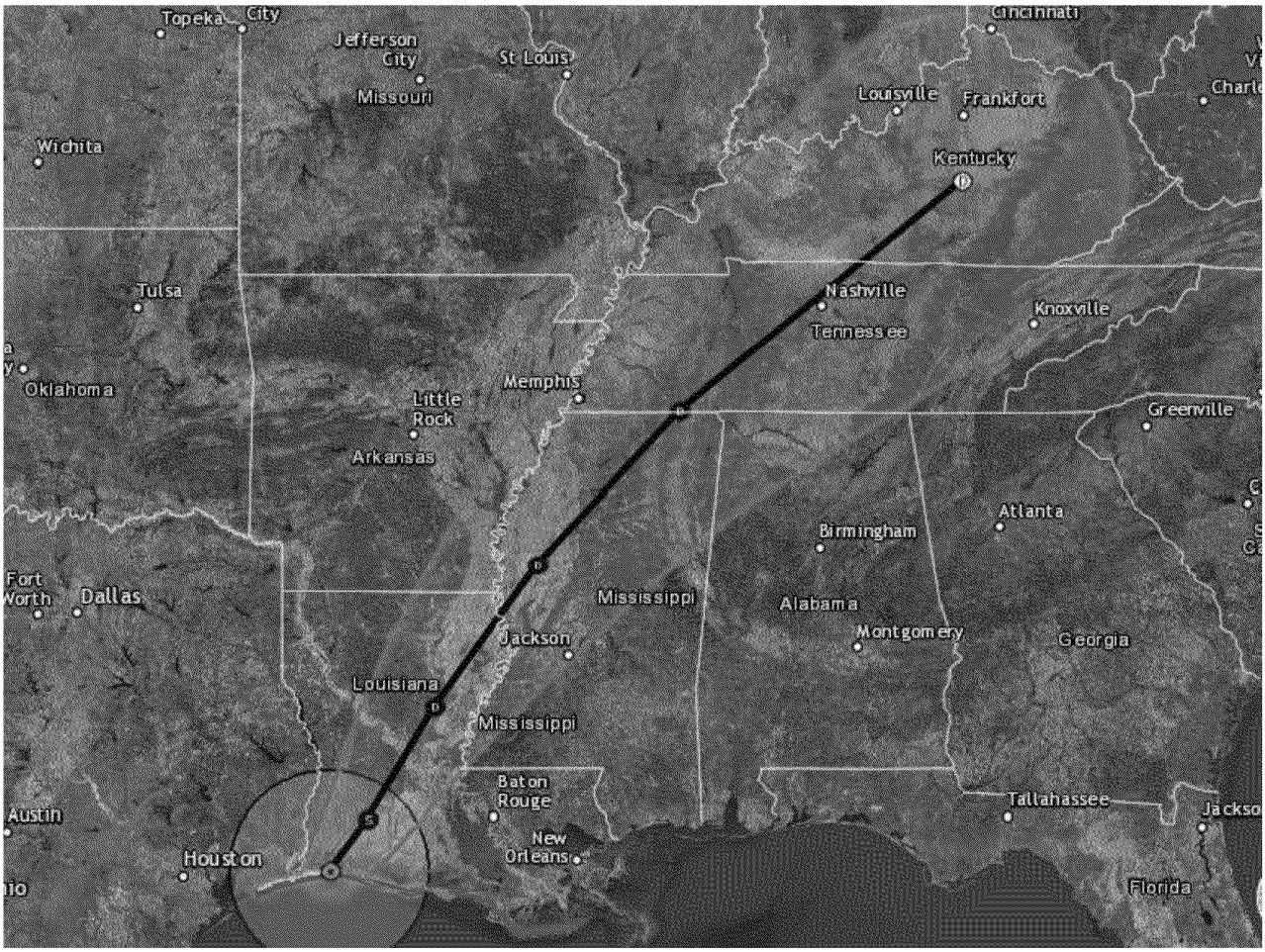
BILL CHAPPELL JAMES DOUBEK



The National Hurricane Center predicts Harvey will move northeast from Louisiana.

Tropical Storm Harvey has made landfall again, this time in Louisiana, says the National Hurricane Center, which said at 4 a.m. local time that the storm hit "just west" of Cameron, La.

A storm surge warning has been issued for a large section of Louisiana's coastline, stretching from Holly Beach to Morgan City. Parts of Louisiana and Texas are under flash flood warnings through Wednesday morning, affecting areas where hundreds of thousands of people live.

As of Wednesday morning, the confirmed death toll from Harvey is eight, across four Texas counties — although that figure is likely to rise and does not include people who are missing or believed dead.

Harvey's slow movement away from southeast Texas promises some relief from relentless rains that have inundated large swaths of Houston, Beaumont and other areas since a downpour began late last week. Late Tuesday, some Houston residents glimpsed something they hadn't seen for days: the sun.

Nathan Rott
@NathanRott
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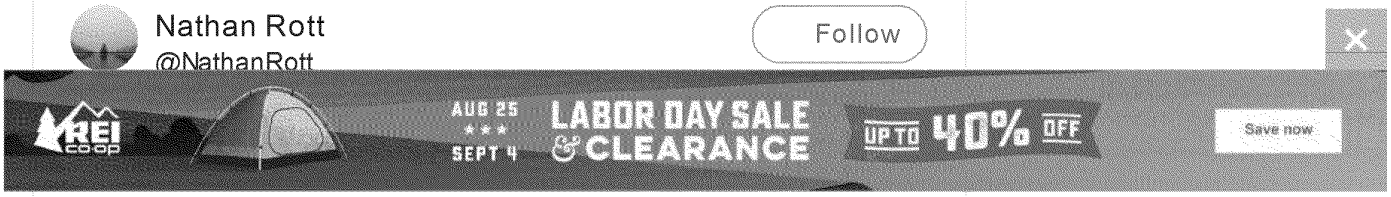

6:29 PM - Aug 29, 2017

5 106 493

Harvey dumped nearly 52 inches of rain at one location east of Houston, the National Weather Service said, breaking the record for the greatest amount of measured single-storm rainfall for the continental U.S. (in Hawaii, cyclone Hiki set the national record of more than 52 inches in 1950).

Houston and surrounding areas face the threat of more flooding from rivers. And there are steep challenges in coping with evacuees using an infrastructure that's been crippled. But there was palpable excitement Wednesday morning, when the National Weather Service office in Houston announced, "Our tropical storm warning, storm surge watch, and flash flood watch have all been canceled. Improving weather conditions to come!"

NWS Houston
@NWSHouston
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Our tropical storm warning, storm surge watch, and flash flood watch have all been canceled. Improving weather conditions to come! #houwx

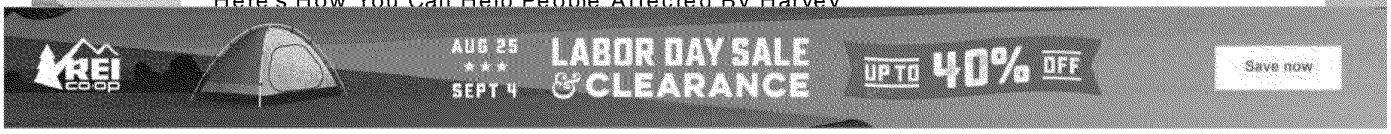
4:27 AM - Aug 30, 2017

8 289 432

Federal and local agencies have saved more than 13,000 people from perilous floodwaters — and those rescue efforts are continuing, as some residents who tried to ride out the storm find themselves in need of aid and shelter.

Along the Texas/Louisiana border and north into western Kentucky, Harvey is expected to bring 3 to 6 inches of rain, the hurricane center says, warning of "isolated amounts up to 10 inches."

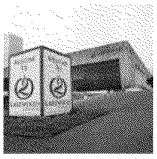
THE TWO-WAY
Here's How You Can Help People Affected By Harvey



Harvey is moving north-northwest at almost 7 mph. The NHC expects the storm's center to "move across the Lower Mississippi Valley and Tennessee Valley through Thursday." Slow-moving storms can mean more potential for destruction as they hang over an area. Harvey was barely moving when it devastated certain areas in Texas.

The NHC says maximum sustained winds are currently about 45 mph, down from a high of 130 mph when Harvey made landfall in Texas several days ago.

The NHC warns of tropical storm force winds as far as 80 miles from Harvey's center.



THE TWO-WAY

After Pressure Mounts, Joel Osteen Says His Houston Megachurch Is Open To Evacuees

"This storm is going to play out over the next 48 to 72 hours and it has tremendous potential to continue to drop heavy amounts of water, and to prevent people from going about their normal daily business in a safe manner," Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards warned Tuesday.

New Orleans does not appear on the storm's primary path, but officials are still concerned about the potential for floods — just as the city marked 12 years since Hurricane Katrina flooded and destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes and displaced even more people.

Harvey Makes Landfall In Louisiana As Houston Copes With Record Rainfall

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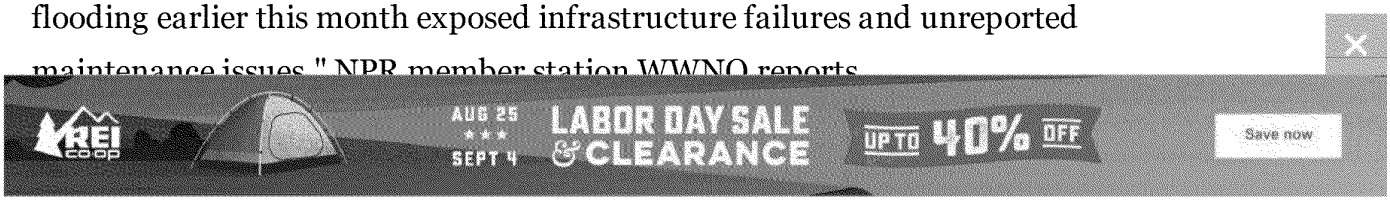
To make things worse for Louisiana's largest city, not all of the drainage pumps in New Orleans are working. "The city's pumping system has been under scrutiny since flooding earlier this month exposed infrastructure failures and unreported maintenance issues," NPR member station WWNO reports.



"People are just on edge" in New Orleans as they wait for the storm's impact, WWNO reporter Tegan Wendland told *Morning Edition* on Wednesday. "Every time it rains, people are left wondering if it's going to be a disaster."

hurricane harvey houston

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Exxon, Shell and other companies said pollutants have been released from their refineries operated as torrential rains damaged storage tanks and other industrial facilities on the Texas Coast.

Shell told state regulators this week that a floating roof over a tank at its oil refinery in Deer Park, Texas, partially sank during the heavy rainfall. The company said 100 pounds of benzene and 100 pounds of toluene were released.

A similar event happened at Exxon Mobil Corp.'s (XOM) refinery in Baytown, Texas. David Gray, a spokesman for the Environmental Protection Agency, said the company reported the release of 15 pounds of benzene. The EPA classifies benzene as a carcinogen. Toluene, a solvent, is less toxic.

A Shell spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"This is an unprecedented storm, and we have taken every effort to minimize emissions and safely shut down equipment," said Exxon spokeswoman Charlotte Huffaker. She said the Irving, Texas-based company was monitoring emission levels and was committed to complying with environmental laws.

Other refinery and chemical plant operators have reported releases due to Harvey, which came ashore as a hurricane but was later downgraded to a tropical storm.

The disclosures highlight the danger posed by flooding in a refinery-rich section of the Gulf Coast that stretches from Corpus Christi, Texas, to Louisiana.

The flooding has caused the shutdown of about 15 percent of the nation's refining capacity, sending gasoline prices higher.

Gasoline futures rose 6 cents, or 4.1 percent, to $1.78 a gallon in trading Tuesday. Retail prices have gained more slowly — up 4 cents in the last week to $2.38 a gallon, according to auto club AAA.

Play VIDEO

How long will Congress take to fund Harvey recovery?

Earlier Tuesday, Motiva Enterprises said that its refinery in Port Arthur, Texas — the biggest in the nation — had cut output to just 40 percent. Motiva, which is owned by Saudi Aramco, the state-owned oil company of Saudi Arabia, said it was dealing with restrictions in the flow of crude oil coming in and products like gasoline going out through pipelines and ports.

A company spokeswoman said there was some water in the plant and local roads were flooded.

The operator of a major pipeline carrying fuel to the East Coast announced it was running at a reduced rate too, compounding pressure on the nation's energy system.

The Colonial Pipeline operator said Tuesday the reduction was due to limited supply from refiners around Houston and storm damage to its facilities in several southeast Texas locations. The company said it dispatched workers to the region.

The Washington Post

Energy and Environment

Houston's polluted Superfund sites threaten to contaminate floodwaters

By Darryl Fears and Brady Dennis August 29 at 3:56 PM

As rain poured and floodwaters inched toward his house in south Houston, Wes Highfield set out on a risky mission in his Jeep Cherokee. He drove in several directions to reach a nearby creek to collect water samples, but each time he was turned back when water washed against his floorboard.

"Yesterday as these large retention ponds filled up, eight feet deep in places, kids were swimming in them, and that's not good," said Highfield, a scientist at Texas A&M University's Galveston campus. The Brio Refining toxic Superfund site, where ethylbenzene, chlorinated hydrocarbons and other chemical compounds were once pooled in pits before the Environmental Protection Agency removed them, sits "just up the road, and it drains into our watershed," he said.

Harris County, home to Houston, has at least a dozen federal Superfund sites, more than any county in Texas. On top of that, the state lists several other highly toxic sites managed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Up to 30 percent of the county is under water. Like other scientists in the area, Highfield is deeply worried about toxins leaking into the water during an unprecedented rainfall and flooding from Hurricane Harvey that caused dams to spill over for the first time in history. On Tuesday, ExxonMobil reported that two of its refineries east of Houston had been damaged in the flood and released pollutants. "I made a couple of phone calls to colleagues who said bottle up [samples], label them and we'll run them all," Highfield said.

On Tuesday, EPA officials in Washington traveled to Houston to monitor environmental risks. On Monday, a spokesman for the Texas commission, Brian McGovern, wrote in an email that its workers "took steps to secure state sites in the projected path of Hurricane Harvey" by removing drums with chemical wastes and shutting down systems. McGovern said that "EPA has been coordinating with potentially responsible parties" that created the federal toxic sites to secure them.

"The TCEQ and EPA will be inspecting sites in the affected areas once reentry is possible," McGovern wrote. But Highfield and a colleague at Texas A&M, Samuel Brody, want to know what's in the water now, as residents with children sometimes plunge into it as they wade to safety from flooded homes.

With its massive petroleum and chemical industry, Houston, part of the "Chemical Coast," presents a huge challenge in a major flooding event, said Mathy Stanislaus, who oversaw the federal Superfund program throughout the Obama administration.

Typically the EPA tries to identify Superfund sites in a major storm's path to "shore up the active operations" and "minimize seepage from sites," Stanislaus said. "This is not the time to dictate; it's the time to work together well with state and local officials to think about needs that need to be met."

Before Sandy, the powerful and destructive weather system that vacillated between a hurricane and tropical storm as it bore down on New Jersey and New York, the agency rushed to sites in harm's way. Still, Stanislaus said, "There was some spread of contamination."

The EPA tested Superfund sites after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and found that contamination was relatively contained, said Nancy Loeb, director of the Environmental Advocacy Center at Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law. But she cautioned that other more risky sites lie in the path of any storm that strikes a major metropolitan area such as Houston.

Risks at Superfund sites where the contamination hasn't been completely resolved "are of the flooding picking up contaminants as it goes," Lobe said. "If the water picks up contaminated sediment from sites, that may get deposited in areas where people frequent — residential properties, parks, ballfields — that were never contaminated before. We can't say for sure it will happen, but it's certainly a possibility."

Residents who use well water are especially vulnerable, Loeb said: "There's no testing of their water to know whether it's been contaminated."

In addition to the toxic pits at the Brio in Houston's Friendswood community, Harris County's polluted Superfund sites include the low-lying San Jacinto River Waste Pits that "is subject to flooding from storm surges generated by both tropical storms (i.e. hurricanes) and extra tropical storms" that push water inward from Galveston Bay, according to an Army Corps of Engineers report released last year.

There's also the Many Diversified Interests site near the heart of the city, the Crystal Chemical Co. site in southwest Houston, the Patrick Bayou site off the Houston Ship Channel, and the Jones Road Plume dry cleaning waste site. They include oily sludge and contaminants dangerous to inhale or touch: perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene and chlorinated hydrocarbons, to name a few.

Highfield became alarmed Saturday when he saw teenagers swimming near a football field where water had risen to the crossbar of the goal post. He mentioned what he saw to Brody and recalled that they both reacted with worry.

"I've been thinking a lot about this," Brody said, so much so that the professor instructed a graduate student to analyze the distance between toxic release inventory areas such as Superfund sites and dry cleaners that store chemicals to 100-year and 500-year floodplains where housing and business developments sit.

According to the analysis, the average distance between the facilities to a 100-year floodplain in Harris County was 44 feet, compared with more than 2,000 feet in nearby Galveston and Chambers counties. The average distance to a 500-year floodplain in Harris County was about 70 feet, compared with more than 3,700 feet in Galveston County and 2,300 feet in Chambers County.

"I would love to do a study that combines sampling and physical measurements to understand the confluence of toxins to these flooding events," Brody says. "When you get water in your home, it's not just water, it's sediment and debris. It's the sediment that these toxic molecules bind to and become dangerous, like dioxins. Once you get water in the home and it has to be cleaned out, people are exposed."

Both Brody and Highfield said Monday that they were fortunate: Water had not entered their houses. A month ago, Brody packed his family of four and moved from the Friendswood section of Houston that's now being devastated by the flood, leaving his friend Highfield there. Brody specifically searched for a house on higher ground and is confident that water won't enter it.

Highfield is less sure as the flood creeps toward his driveway. All around him, houses and cars are underwater. It fuels his concern about what might enter his house with the water, and what his neighbors and their children encounter when they frolic in the water.

"It was absolutely those kids swimming" that triggered his determination to test the water, regardless of whether Texas or the EPA did it. "That was kind of the aha moment. I plotted a path earlier thinking I could get kind of a back road path where I thought the water would be lower at the creek."

But it was no use. His car was no match for what is by far the worst flooding ever in a city that has flooded since the month it was first founded. "I need it to stop raining. And I need things to drain a little bit," Highfield said.

Read more:

The health dangers from Hurricane Harvey's floods

See complete coverage of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath

Sea level rise could destroy Tampa Bay if a hurricane hits

Scott Pruitt vows to speed the nation's Superfund cleanups. Communities wonder how.

Arkema chemical plant faces explosion risk after Harvey floodwaters

By Matt Dempsey Updated 5:36 pm, Tuesday, August 29, 2017

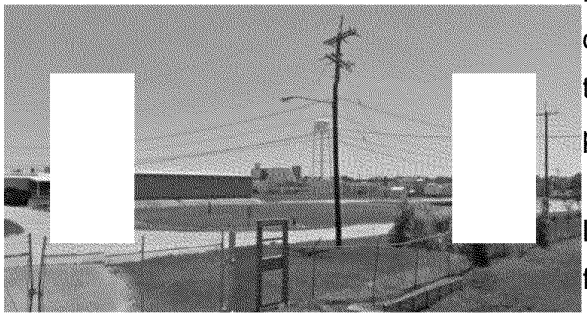

Photo: Google Maps

IMAGE 1 OF 193

Twelve workers were reportedly trapped early Tuesday morning at a Crosby chemical plant on the brink of catching fire as firefighters were on the way, according to the wife of one of the workers.

Flood waters from Hurricane Harvey created an emergency situation that could trigger explosions at the Arkema chemical plant northeast of Houston in Crosby.

Late Monday night, the facility lost power from both its primary supply and its backup generators due to flooding. Employees moved highly volatile organic peroxides into back-up containers to keep them cool. If this class of chemical gets too hot, it can cause fires or explosions.

FLOOD CLAIMS: Damages could surpass Ike's $12.5 billion of insured losses

"At this time, while we do not believe there is any imminent danger, the potential for a chemical reaction leading to a fire and/or explosion withing the site confines is real," Arkema spokeswoman Janet Smith said on Tuesday.

The Crosby Fire Department evacuated one employee last night and the rest of the staff was evacuated Tuesday afternoon when the refrigeration in some of the back-up containers also

US President Donald Trump has arrived in Texas to survey the response to devastating Tropical Storm Harvey, the first major natural disaster of his White House tenure, as officials in Houston struggled to manage the record-breaking rains. You can watch his visit live, below. The slow-moving storm has brought catastrophic flooding to Texas, killed at least nine people, led to mass evacuations and paralyzed Houston, the fourth most-populous U.S. city. Some 30,000 people were expected to seek emergency shelter as the flooding entered its fourth day. Officials in Harris County, where Houston is located, said reservoirs built to handle drainage water were beginning to overflow on Tuesday. They urged residents to evacuate as they released water to alleviate pressure on two dams, a move that would add to flooding along the Buffalo Bayou waterway that runs through the area. Officials in Brazoria County, south of Houston, also called for immediate evacuations around a levee Columbia Lakes that had been breached by Harvey's floodwaters. Some 3,500 people already have been rescued from high waters in the Houston area with police, firefighters and National Guard troops continuing to try to locate those marooned in high waters.

Media: Euronews News

started to fail. The French specialty chemical company produces organic peroxides at the plant.

It would be surprising if the company had not considered as scenario like this, said Sam Mannan of Texas A&M University's Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center.

Companies typically would have the ability to quench the organic peroxides in situations like this with another chemical so it's no longer dangerous.

"You'll lose the feedstock but it's safer than letting it go into runaway mode," Mannan said.

The plant at 18000 Crosby Eastgate Road, northeast of Houston, has been shut down since Friday in anticipation of the storm.

HARVEY FROM ABOVE: Aerial photos show impact of the storm

Arkema's Crosby facility is among the Houston-area sites with the highest potential for harm in an incident, according to a 2016 analysis by Texas A&M's Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center and the Houston Chronicle.

It was an organic peroxide, cumene hydroperoxide, that helped land Arkema on that list. Many homes and businesses are within two miles of the facility.

The company is working with the Department of Homeland Security and the state of Texas on a safe location to have a command post to manage the situation.

mySA
http://www.chron.com/business/energy/article/Exxon-Mobil-closing-Beaumont-refinery-for-Harvey-12160958.php

Exxon Mobil halts operations at Beaumont refinery

Jordan Blum, Houston Chronicle Updated 9:40 am, Wednesday, August 30, 2017

Exxon Mobil said Wednesday it is shutting down its large Beaumont refinery after Tropical Storm Harvey battered the area Tuesday night.

Exxon Mobil, Motiva Enterprises and Total all are shutting down their refinery complexes in the Beaumont and Port Arthur region. About 20 percent of the nation's refining capacity is now offline.

Exxon Mobil spokeswoman Charlotte Huffaker said Harvey created operational issues that triggered the Beaumont shutdown. Exxon had already halted petrochemical activities at the Beaumont campus.

"We are in the process of a safe and systematic shutdown of the majority of our units," Huffaker said. "Safety is our first priority, and we are taking all precautions to minimize the impact to the community and employees throughout the shutdown process."

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HEARST

Houston's hazardous air pollution has spiked as Hurricane Harvey shuts down refineries and petrochemical complexes.

Emergency shutdowns released more than 2 million pounds of harmful pollutants into the air, according to initial reports to Texas regulators.

Affected Houston-areas refineries include ExxonMobil's sprawling Baytown complex, as well as refineries run by Chevron-Phillips, Petrobas, Royal Dutch Shell. It also includes the shutdown of Motiva Enterprises' Port Arthur facility—the nation's largest crude oil refinery.

While the shutdowns may be necessary from a safety perspective, shutting down boilers and other equipment can produce significant amounts of air pollution. Chevron Phillips reported to Texas' Commission on Environmental Quality that the company expects to exceed permitted limits for several hazardous pollutants, such as 1,3-butadiene, benzene, and ethylene, during shutdown procedures.

Harvey also is taxing the various government responses to damaged energy infrastructure.

A 14-inch pipeline in La Porte, Texas, spewed a toxic gas for several hours—just one of the infrastructure incidents challenging regulators as Harvey dumps record-breaking rain on the state. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is monitoring oil, gas, and other facilities reporting spills and giving technical guidance to wastewater operators in flood-impacted areas. And the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration is working with pipeline operators to give them better views of the integrity of their facilities.

Economic modeling can be confusing—even to EPA's Science Advisory Board.

Its members told the EPA that the agency model for evaluating broad economic costs and benefits of air pollution regulations isn't clear enough to help the public. The analysis is intended to help utilities, industries, and policymakers determine the effects of federal regulations on factors like energy prices and employment.

Board members who met Aug. 29 to discuss their draft report on EPA's draft economy-wide model asked for clarifications and transparency on the model's shortcomings.

- "Garbage juice:" North Carolina lawmakers schedule a Wednesday veto-override vote to allow landfill operators to spray leachate and wastewater into the air to manage solid waste.

- Wisconsin's top environmental regulator is joining EPA's regional leadership team in Kansas.
- Duke Energy could add 700 megawatts of solar-power capacity to Florida's grid by 2021 and stop billing customers for a halted nuclear project under a plan filed with state regulators.
- Post-Harvey, federal and state leaders should pause to make sure money being spent will help prevent future damage, analysts say.

- Noon | Women in Green forum | How women impact the environmental industry
- 2 p.m. | EPA webinar | How drought and other environmental concerns affectglobal water quantity and quality
- 3 p.m. | World Resources Institute report | Helping Asia's poorest people accesswater pollution information

"This is a tremendously costly endeavor, and that's why we haven't done it already." — Peter Wilcoxen, head of an EPA Science Advisory Board panel, on finishing a draft report on modeling the economic impacts of regulation.

- A list of Harvey resources compiled by the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies.
- Governments and business may face more lawsuits for failing to prevent damage from floods, heat waves, and other climate change risks, a commentary published in Nature says.
- A Massachusetts company using ammonia in its refrigeration system is now complying with federal laws, EPA announces.

The EPA is temporarily relaxing various environmental regulations to pave the way for more gasoline availability in crisis-struck Gulf states. That's because gasoline is needed to offset shortages tied to oil refinery shutdowns and flooding, the agency and governors in Texas and Louisiana say.

But the move is leaving biofuel producers confused.

Administrator Scott Pruitt in recent days gave the go-ahead to gas stations in parts of Texas and Louisiana to sell fuel that breaks environmental rules on smog prevention. Those rules involve arcane regulations on the Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) of gas—which is used to measure ozone threats—and a type of refinement that limits pollutant emissions.

Pruitt, however, isn't allowing sales of gasoline containing 15 percent ethanol (E15), which is banned from sale in the summer months over RVP concerns. That issue has drawn the most attention to the RVP metric in recent years.

"The waivers issued don't do anything to allow expanded E15 blending," Renewable Fuels Association Executive Vice President Geoff Cooper said in a statement. Cooper said the waiver will allow sales of gasoline without any ethanol, a move that he said "seems odd."

The renewable fuel standard requires biofuel blending into gasoline, and now most gasoline sold nationwide contains 10 percent ethanol.

Pruitt also lifted gasoline requirements for 13 Atlanta-area counties. An agency spokesperson said EPA "is ready to act expeditiously" if extreme and unusual supply problems occur elsewhere.

EDITORIALS

Deadly gumbo and Houton's Katrina: Hurricane Harvey cuts close

Looming catastrophes to the east and west reflect political failure.

Copyright 2017: Houston Chronicle | August 29, 2017 | Updated: August 29, 2017 8:53pm

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Photo: Gary Coronado, Staff

A man throws a cast net into the Buffalo Bayou with the Barker Dam and Barker Reservoir in the background in Houston, Texas. The Barker Reservoir and Barker Dam in conjunction with the Addicks Reservoir prevent downstream flooding of Buffalo Bayou in the City of Houston. (Gary Coronado / Houston Chronicle)

Stretches of the city are beginning to emerge from the waters, but Houston remains bookended on east and west by two looming catastrophes - the San Jacinto waste pits and the Addicks and Barker Dams.

On the west side, two earthen berms have held back a wall of water that, if it breaks free, would create a deluge unseen since Hurricane Katrina submerged New Orleans.

A failure at Addicks alone would leave nearly 7,000 people dead and inflict $22.7 billion in property damage, Houston Chronicle reporter Lauren Caruba wrote last year.

So if you think the situation is bad enough, that is how things gets worse.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is acting to head off this unthinkably disastrous scenario. Part of that plan involves releasing water from the two overfilled reservoirs. Millions of gallons will be added to a swollen Buffalo Bayou that already claimed neighborhoods in the Memorial City area and along the Energy Corridor.

We'd like to tell you that these dams, located near the intersection of Interstate 10 and Texas 6, are up-to-date marvels of technology and that everything was under control. But we'd be lying.

The Corps branded both dams with the agency's worst safety rating and labeled them as being at "extremely high risk of catastrophic failure" in 2009. Only four other dams in the nation earned that rock-bottom rating, and none are near a city as big as Houston.

Repairs totaling $73 million were well underway at Addicks and Barker before Harvey struck. Even if they survive this test of Mother Nature, the work planned to be completed in 2020 will still be insufficient to more than a

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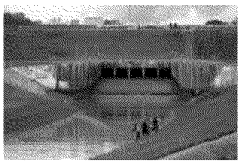
EDITORIALS


Deadly gumbo and Houton's Katrina: Hurricane Harvey cuts close

From the governor: What stands strong is the character of Texans

Fox: How to make 500-year storms

Wednesday letters: United we stand, build mentality

Tuesday letters: Hurricane reflections; Camp Logan

adequately handle our region's flooding infrastructure needs.

And now, as rain keeps falling over Houston, the Corps confirms that water flowing around the Addicks Reservoir spillways for the first time in its history. More than 3,000 homes have already flooded. Some may remain underwater for more than a month.

Ada, OK: This Brilliant Company Is Disrupting A $200 Billion Industry
EVERQUOTE

A disaster of this scale may seem unthinkable, but environmental and engineering activists have been ringing the warning bell for years.

This page wrote an editorial last year urging local and federal officials to make the dams an immediate priority. "There's always the chance, however small," we wrote, "that the next storm will be 'the perfect storm.'" We may be living through it. Harris County, though, has preferred to focus on development foremost, even allowing construction within the reservoirs themselves. And you have to look back decades to find an era when Congress prioritized such infrastructure work.

For the time being, our words of encouragement are all directed toward the Corps, and our prayers are with the families who have lost their homes.

But while we fear a dam failure to the west, disaster may have already struck in the east, where the San Jacinto waste pits form one of the most poisonous places in Texas. Lying underneath the San Jacinto River adjacent to the Interstate 10 bridge, the pits hold a toxic sludge of leftover dioxin and other carcinogens deposited by a paper mill in the 1960s.

Now we worry that rushing water and debris ruptured the pits and washed poison downriver.

Activist Jackie Young, a former Miss Rodeo and head of the San Jacinto River Coalition, has long worked to draw attention to this environmental hazard.

Swimmers for years have avoided the San Jacinto River for fear of exposure to pollution, and the fish and crab caught from the waters might as well be balls of poison. What happens if this contamination flows down river to Galveston Bay?

The waste pits are one of at least a dozen federal Superfund sites across the region, and any one of them could transform floodwaters into a deadly gumbo of chemicals and carcinogens.

Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency recommended a full cleanup at San Jac, and yet the waste pits remained in the river.

Why? The companies responsible wasted time by fighting a lawsuit from Harris County, and Congress has long failed to lend the attention and resources needed for a quick cleanup. Now it may be too late.

The waters will soon start to recede and the nation will start to ask how it can help. Any politician serious about our city must dedicate federal resources to dams on the west and pollution on the east. Our city cannot go another year hoping that we avoid a worst-case scenario. Hurricane Harvey has been destructive enough.

HEARST newspapers

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GRAY MATTERS

Flooding and the city: The big picture

After Harvey, will Houston start asking the tricky questions?

By Allyn West | August 30, 2017

1

Photo: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/Getty Images

A truck driver walks past an abandoned truck while checking the depth of an underpass during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey on August 28, 2017 in Houston.

We're still trying to figure out what Harvey means for the city and the region going forward.

But before we ask any questions, let's state a fact as plainly as possible: This is the worst storm the U.S. has ever seen.

"[It's] off the charts by many measures," writes Mark Fischetti in Scientific American. Stunning, almost cartoonish graphics show the volume of water and scale of a storm worsened by the impact of climate change on a vulnerable region that just keeps getting inundated, one once-in-a-lifetime event after another.

"It's hard to explain the stupefying vastness," Matt Pearce writes in the Los Angeles Times.

Now, though, a few days in, as the rains blow east and away, as armies of volunteers mobilize in boats and form lines at shelters to help those in need and as those of us trapped with no way out scroll through the internet and squirm in our private anxieties, questions about the implications of Harvey are beginning to form.

Some are wondering whether the design of the city, all 627 square miles of it, is to blame. Ian Bogost in the Atlantic questions what he calls "the pavement of civilization."

> *"Many planners contend that impervious surface [i.e., roads, parking lots, sidewalks and othe pavements, along with asphalt, concrete, brick, stone and other building materials] itself is th*

problem. The more of it there is, the less absorption takes place and the more runoff has to be managed. Reducing development, then, is one of the best ways to manage urban flooding."

Bogost also talks to experts in stormwater management who question the typical strategies that Houston employs:

"Thomas Debo, an emeritus professor of city planning at Georgia Tech who also wrote a popular textbook on stormwater management, takes issue with pavement reduction as a viable cure for urban flooding. 'We focus too much on impervious surface and not enough on the conveyance of water,' he tells me. Even when reduced in quantity, the water still ends up in in pipes and concrete channels, speeding fast toward larger channels. 'It's like taking an aspirin to cure an ailment,' he scoffs. Houston's flooding demonstrates the impact.

These are tricky questions, anyway, questions that Houston hasn't always been good at answering. Is the city developing responsibly? What would that look like? Is the region managing stormwater as well as it can? Who should we be listening to?

What *should* we be building, as we rebuild?

Photo: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/Getty Images

A man dodges flood waters during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey on August 27, 2017 in Houston.

If business as usual is, at least in part, to blame, another question is whether any of these tricky questions themselves will summon enough force to guide the city and region into what Gov. Abbott calls "a new normal." As the Chronicle's Mike Snyder asks in his recent column: Will Harvey strike us as bad enough that it leads to "new ways of thinking about how Houston should grow?"

And how should Houston grow?

"Our officials are going to have to get used to hearing things they don't want to hear," Rice University's Jim Blackburn tells the Daily Beast. "[Houston's] engineering is based on old statistics that don't take climate change into account. We spend all our time in this part of the world denying climate change, but

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that keeps us from asking the important questions. I think this event has opened up that issue."

And if we ask those important questions, there might be a way to build the city that we must build, Eric Holthaus suggests in Politico:

> *"It's possible to imagine something else: a hopeful future that diverges from climate dystopia and embraces the scenario in which our culture inevitably shifts toward building cities that work with the storms that are coming, instead of Sisyphean efforts to hold them back. That will require abandoning buildings and concepts we currently hold dear, but we'll be rewarded with a safer, richer, more enduring world in the end."*

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The water was seeping in our apartment. Was it time to evacuate?

How the internet rallied to rescue a family in Katy

VIDEO: Houston unites to face Harvey

To stay or go during Harvey? This Houston couple can't decide.

I studied climate change with Exxon's money. This is my

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GREATER HOUSTON

Will Harvey lead to new thinking about area development?

By Mike Snyder | August 28, 2017 | Updated: August 29, 2017 8:25am

9

Photo: Steve Gonzales

IMAGE 1 OF 4
Houston is losing land cover - places like the Katy Prairie - which helps reduce flooding photographed Wednesday, June 29, 2016, in Waller. (Steve Gonzales / Houston Chronicle)

Even before Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Texas coast, the chorus of online scolding had begun.

"Houston will pay a high price for paving over its flood plains with sprawl," Kriston Capps, a writer for CityLab, tweeted Friday afternoon as forecasters struggled to come up with adjectives -- unprecedented, unimaginable, apocalyptic -- to describe the deluge expected in the Houston area.

It's tough to capture nuance in 140 characters, and Capps' tweet failed to convey the complexity of the factors that make Greater Houston vulnerable to catastrophic floods. The role of development, however, is worthy of attention because, at least theoretically, we have the power to do something about it.

We can't make Houston less flat or change its weather, although steps to slow the pace of climate change could make a difference over the long term. What we can do is rethink how and where we build the houses, shopping centers and parking lots that deflect water rather than absorb it.

Single-family homes on big lots far from the city core -- mostly in unincorporated areas where few regulations apply -- represent the predominant form of development in the Houston area. The Katy Prairie, which produces grass that soaks up water like little sponges, lies to the west of the city in the hottest suburban market.

While urban development has enjoyed a resurgence, families still flock to subdivisions and master-planned communities for affordable homes on relatively cheap land. And the area's leaders generally embrace the conventional wisdom that a loosely regulated, market-driven system enables the region to grow and flourish.

Up to now, policy changes aimed at reducing flooding have amounted to little more than tinkering around the edges. And even that has been difficult.

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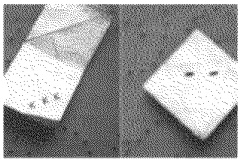
GREATER HOUSTON

Struggling mall, aging apartments create challenges in

New Katy Buc-ee's has gas pumps as far as the eye can see

Pearland draws attention of Democrat Beto O'Rourke seeking


'KKK origami' case recalls use of religious symbols to promote

New Pasadena mayor shows independence with bus service

In 2006, the Houston City Council banned new development on vacant land in floodways. These are the areas closest to the channels of bayous and streams, where flood risks are highest - flood plains on steroids, if you will.

But the city retreated two years later, relaxing the new rules in the face of fierce resistance from owners whose property values plummeted as a result of the ban. The struggle over this relatively modest step illustrates the enormous challenge of undertaking broader changes on a regional scale.

Defenders of the Houston model often cite the value of requirements for stormwater retention to offset runoff. "Banning new development or impermeable surfaces is not the answer," says Tory Gattis, a senior fellow at the Center for Opportunity Urbanism.

Yet skepticism about the effectiveness of such measures, which are inconsistent across the region, is growing. And pressure to do something --- anything - increases as one catastrophic flood after another pummels neighborhoods from Clear Lake to Conroe: Memorial Day 2015. Tax Day 2016. Memorial Day 2016. And now Harvey, which produced a flood anointed as the worst in the city's history days before it was expected to end.

Will this be he storm that finally leads to new ways of thinking about how Houston should grow?

ED_001581_00000052

"This is one of those events that will precipitate change," said Jim Blackburn, a Houston attorney specializing in environmental matters. "To some extent the question is, how open are our elected officials going to be to hearing messages that in the past they have not wanted to hear?"

Messages like the need to apply tougher rules not just to new developments, but also to redevelopment of existing properties. Or to consider the impacts of climate change on flooding. Or to preserve the flood-absorbing wetlands and native prairies that haven't already been paved over.

Failure to act boldly, Blackburn argues, could imperil Houston's future. Worldwide images of a paralyzed city, with terrified residents plucked from rooftops by rescuers, could make it harder for vital industries to attract skilled workers.

"This is the time," said Blackburn, "that we can make or break the future of Houston."

For now, of course, the region's leaders are properly focused on the immediate crisis. Recovery from this storm will take years. Sometime soon, though, we must begin to challenge our most comfortable assumptions and pay attention to those messages our leaders don't want to hear. We ignore them at our peril.

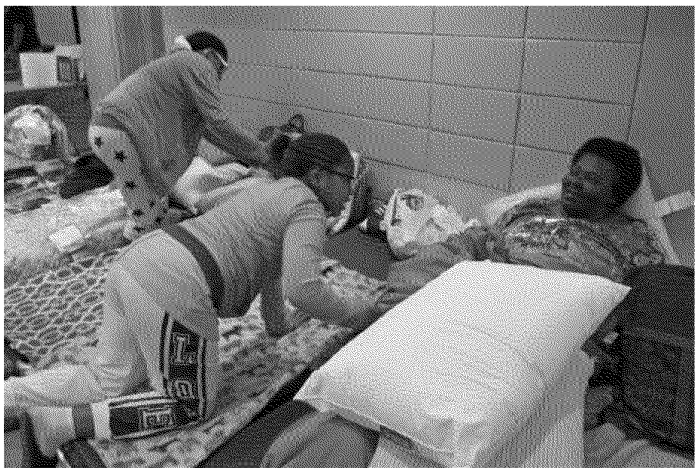
Mike Snyder

Greater Houston columnist

http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_d2cb06e2-8d7a-11e7-adc9-e325e02d7101.html

Southwest Louisiana escapes brunt of Harvey after landfall Wednesday; about 300 sheltered at Civic Center

BY GRACE TOOHEY | GTOOHEY@THEADVOCATE.COM AUG 30, 2017 - 7:00 AM



Regugees from Hurricane Harvey ooding Brianna James, 12, Graysion Warren, 9 and Linda Warren, left to right, all from Westlake, make up their cots in the Lake Charles Civic Center Tuesday as people brace for more rain Tuesday into Wednesday.

Advocate Sta Photo by PATRICK DENNIS

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Grace Toohey

The National Guard and Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Of ce had a quiet night Tuesday, they both said early Wednesday.

Vinton, a town about 20 miles west of Lake Charles, was hit hardest as Tropical Storm Harvey made landfall early Wednesday, said Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's spokeswoman Kim Myers.

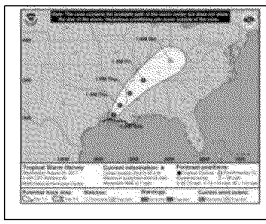
The National Guard made no rescues overnight, while the Sheriff's Of ce rescued six people total, said National Guard spokesman Sgt. Garrett Dipuma.

Story Continued Below

Both agencies remain on call for any reports of ooding or rescues.

Much of southwest Louisiana saw minimal impacts following the landfall of Tropical Storm Harvey early Wednesday, which unfortunately left Beaumont and the most eastern part of Texas taking the brunt of the storm. In 24 hours, Beaumont got 26 inches of rain Tuesday, said National Weather Service meteorologist Tim Humphrey, in their Lake Charles of ce.

"While we missed out here, certainly 50 miles to the west did see the ooding impacts we predicted," Humphrey said.



Harvey makes landfall again in southwest Louisiana, expected to weaken as it moves north

Many people, however, remained camped out in the Lake Charles Civic Center, which was prepared to hold more than 700 displaced residents as of Tuesday night. About 300 people had relocated there as of Wednesday morning.

Catherine Mott, 60, sat propped up by two pillows on her cot in the Lake Charles Civic Center Tuesday night, content with her spot along the wall of the large oor so her oxygen tank could stay plugged in.

"I feel better, and safer, here," Mott said.

She had called for help evacuating from her home in Le Bleu, just outside of Lake Charles, after watching the rice elds, roads and all typically-dry land swell with water.

"I've only seen it one other time like that before," Mott said, who's lived there for 30 years. "Everything was ooded."

She said her nieces and nephews had taken tubes outside earlier in the day to enjoy the almost lakes that had become their neighborhood -- but she wanted to get out before it got worse.

Can't see video below? Click here.

Couple Jarii Nicholson and Kasey Coleman had a more impromptu departure from their new Lake Charles home. The National Guard knocked on their door around 11:30 p.m. Monday night, telling them to leave. The water in their neighborhood had become waist-deep, Nicholson said.

"We were about to go to sleep, we didn't know we were in danger of being washed away," Nicholson said from the Lake Charles Civic Center, where he and Coleman had xed up a corner with two cots for them to wait out the storm surrounded by about 200 others.

As the storm moves north, the Sabine River basin area, which includes the most western portions of Louisiana, is looking at ve to 10 inches of rain. The Lake Charles area, on the edge of that, is forecasted to get three to six inches, Humphrey said.

Lake Charles is experienced 20 to 25 mph winds early Wednesday, but tropical storm gusts are possible, potentially around 30 mph, Humphrey said.

Lake Charles rst responders rescuing some residents; asking others to leave vulnerable neighborhoods

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Crude slips, gasoline jumps as storm shuts a fifth of U.S. fuel output

Alex Lawler

FILE PHOTO: The Exxon Mobil Beaumont Polyethylene Plant is seen during tropical storm Harvey in Beaumont, Texas, U.S. August 28, 2017.

Jonathan Bachman/File Photo

LONDON (Reuters) - Crude oil slid and gasoline futures hit their highest since mid-2015 on Wednesday as flooding and damage from Tropical Storm Harvey shut over a fifth of U.S. refineries, curbing demand for crude while raising the risk of fuel shortages.

Refineries with output of 4.1 million barrels per day (bpd) were offline on Tuesday, representing 23 percent of U.S. production, Goldman Sachs said. Restarting plants even under the best conditions can take a week or more.

"It will be a while before operations can return to normal and the U.S. refining industry is bracing itself for an extended shutdown," Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM said.

Brent oil LCOc1, the international benchmark for crude trading, was down 50 cents at $51.50 a barrel by 1239 GMT. U.S. crude CLc1 fell 44 cents to $46.00.

In refined products, price movement was more dramatic and gains increased after sources on Wednesday said Total's Port Arthur, Texas, refinery had been shut by a power outage resulting from the storm.

U.S. gasoline futures RBc1 were up 5 percent at $1.8732 a gallon, having earlier hit $1.9009, the highest since July 2015. Diesel futures HOc1 advanced by 2 percent to $1.6986 a gallon, having touched their highest since January at $1.7161.

"Crude is always easier to replace than products," said Olivier Jakob, analyst at Petromatrix. "If the refineries stay shut for more than a week or 10 days, it's going to be very problematic."

Harvey made landfall on Friday as the most powerful hurricane to hit Texas in more than 50 years, resulting in the death of at least 17 people.

In addition to shutting oil refineries, about 1.4 million bpd of U.S. crude production has been disrupted, equivalent to 15 percent of total output, Goldman Sachs said.

The impact of the storm overshadowed the latest weekly figures on U.S. supplies from the American Petroleum Institute (API) and a 360,000-bpd drop in Libya's output due to renewed unrest in the OPEC producer.

U.S. crude inventories fell by 5.78 million barrels last week, the API industry group reported on Tuesday, suggesting a gradual tightening of the U.S. oil market. The figures, however, do not reflect the impact from Harvey. [API/S]

Traders are awaiting the latest U.S. government inventory report, due at 1430 GMT from the Energy Information Administration, to compare with the API figures.

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http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Port-Aransas-now-open-for-cleanup-takes-stock-12159268.php

A battered, isolated Port Aransas picks itself up

By Sig Christenson Updated 7:46 am, Wednesday, August 30, 2017

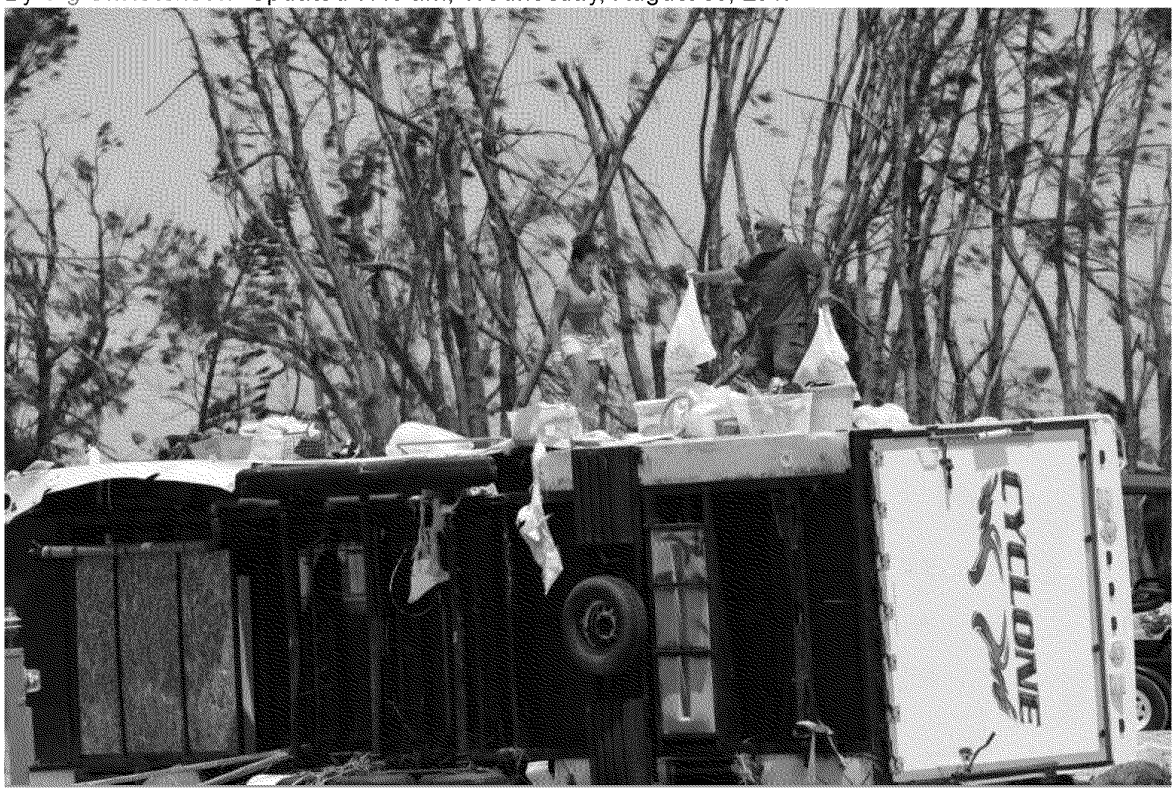

IMAGE 1 OF 48

Glen Gonzales, 47, helps Brenda Travieso, 53, both from San Antonio, remove personal belongings from a travel trailer in the Tropic Island Resort in Port Aransas, Texas, Tuesday, August 29, 2017. The trailer ... more

PORT ARANSAS — This beach island community lay prostrate Tuesday — no internet or phone service, no running water or electricity and a dawn-to-dusk curfew. Days after Hurricane Harvey lashed the Coastal Bend with winds nearing 130 mph, Aransas Pass residents labored under a frontier isolation, knowing next to nothing about the fate of others down the road or across Redfish Bay.

Yet they were on their feet and volunteers were starting to arrive with water, brooms, shovels and a neighborly spirit that brought Jeanne Jonas to tears.

RELATED: Smaller Central Texas towns slammed by Hurricane Harvey on road to recovery

A crew from Church Unlimited descended on her one-story home, where a thick layer of mud covered the floor and the furniture

u that really, there is a God,"
came from nowhere to help

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Roughly 30 members of the nondenominational church, which has 11 campuses throughout South Texas, cleaned up the parking lot [illegible] de the IGA supermarket on Alister Street, the town's main drag. By afternoon, they were running a distribution hub for at least 2 tons of bottled water.

At least eight in every 10 homes and businesses were destroyed or damaged, Port Aransas police Lt. James Stokes said. There have been no storm-related fatalities reported, and so far no arrests, including for looting, which remains a concern for some throughout the region.

RELATED: As Houston dries out, rescues and recovery continue

Just how many residents Harvey left homeless was unknown, but Stokes called it "a significant amount." He couldn't say where they could go but hoped they would have families to fall back on.

Utility poles had been bent by high winds or pushed to the ground for miles along the road into town. Up to 90 percent of homes had taken some damage, police estimated. Some were completely shattered, not far from others left intact.

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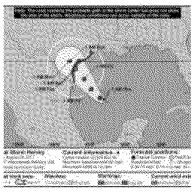

Texas beaches closing as Hurricane Harvey makes its way toward coast

Retired Austin construction company owner Arthur Serrano, 58, was relieved to see a group of the church volunteers at his home, which had been inundated by 6 feet

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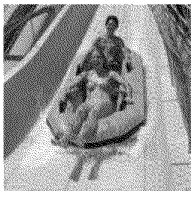

Schlitterbahn Waterparks close multiple Texas locations in preparation for Harvey

50 images that show Harvey's destructive trek into Texas

of water and had a gooey, smelly layer of mud on the garage floor.

“Well, I just want to say, it almost makes me cry,” Serrano said. “When they drove up and said, ‘Hey, we’re here to help you,’ and then we all got together and we said a prayer, I had to fight the tears because so much here looks insurmountable and we’re thinking we had weeks of work ahead of us.”

RELATED: Harvey horror: Shivering tot found clinging to drowned mom

At the grocery parking lot, church members Jason and Courtney John helped unload the water and other supplies, basics ranging from snacks and canned food to diapers, baby formula and paper plates for delivery wherever needed. Making people aware was still an issue.

“People are driving up, getting the things they need, but we’re trying to spread the word,” Courtney John said. “Just driving by, people don’t understand what’s going on.”

> As if to amplify the point, people in a passing truck turned to stare at the volunteers, not sure of what to make of the scene.

“Come get some stuff, guys!” she cried.

Movement was difficult and information about the outside world was hard to come by.

“We haven’t had television or internet or cellphones or any kind of social media, phone calls, any of that kind of stuff for several days,” Stokes said, noting that it hadn’t hurt his police department’s ability to do its job. “We are slowly starting to get those

capabilities back, but they are very spotty and hit and miss at this point, so we haven't been able to get anything consistent."

RELATED: Harvey floods shelter for evacuees in Texas

Residents and those who own weekend homes streamed into town to inspect the damage. Pete Lozano, 64, of San Antonio arrived Monday — the first day people were allowed to come back — to check the retirement home he owns with his wife, Ludi.

"What they're going to need is a whole lot of disaster aid to rebuild this community," said Lozano, who once coordinated evacuations for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

The recovery, for now, consisted of painfully small steps — picking up boards, throwing out ruined clothes and sweeping debris into piles. Madelyn Haas, whose mother's jewelry store was inundated by 4 feet of water, worked with other church volunteers at Serrano's home.

She wasn't bothered by the muddy work.

"It doesn't really matter. I'm feeling good that I'm helping," said Haas, 33, of North Padre Island.

RELATED: Heartbreaking photos show Texans evacuating homes as flood waters rise during Harvey

Another volunteer, Bill Robinson, planned to help out until teachers report at Flour Bluff Primary School, where he is an assistant principal. Clutching a pair of hammers and a nail puller, he said folks would help him if the tables had been turned.

"I'm here by choice," said Robinson, 57, of North Padre Island. "If I had a choice, I could be anywhere I want. This is where I want to be, helping out people with our church and serving alongside our brothers — what Jesus would want us to do: help each other."

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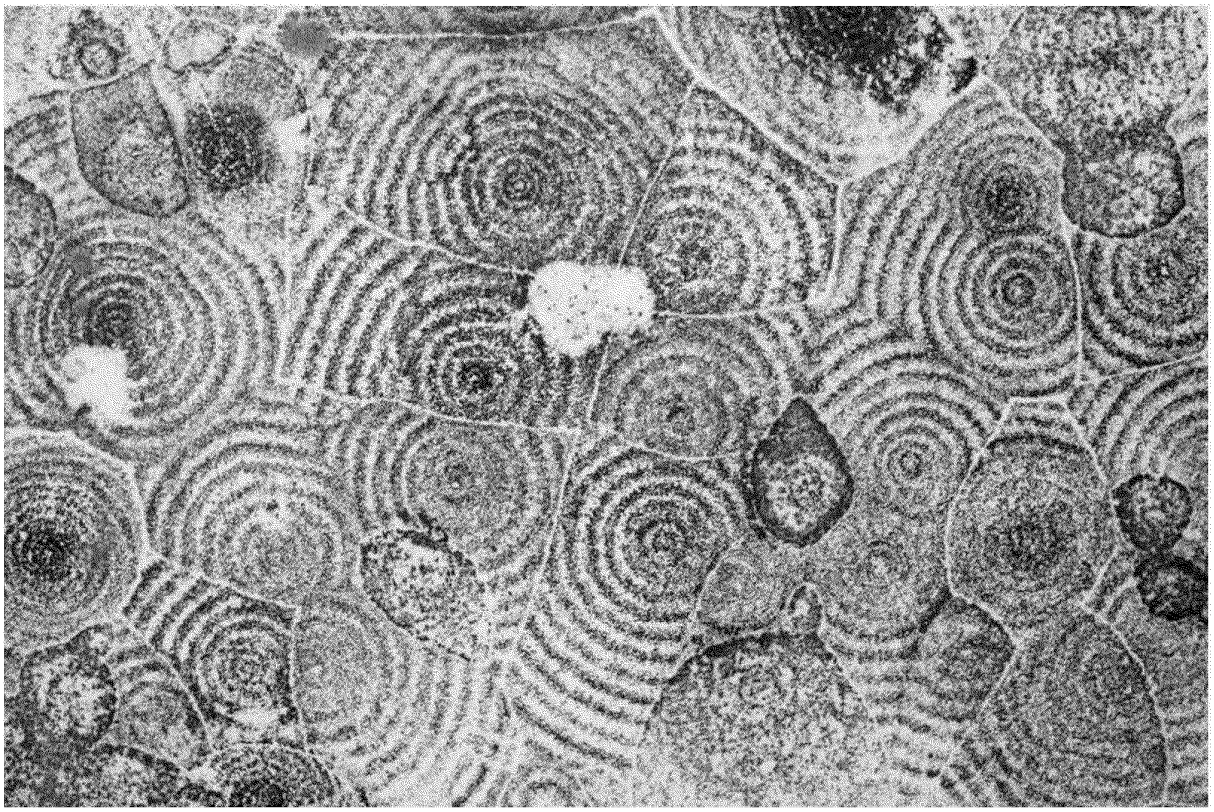
The Looming Consequences of Breathing Mold

Flooding means health issues that unfold for years.



Mold grows in concentric circles on a ceiling in a New Orleans apartment after Hurricane Katrina.

Lucas Jackson / Reuters

JAMES HAMBLIN

4:30 AM ET | HEALTH

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The flooding of Houston is a health catastrophe unfolding publicly in slow motion. Much of the country is watching as 50 inches of water rise around the chairs of residents in nursing homes and submerge semitrucks. Some 20 trillion gallons of water are pouring onto the urban plain, where developers have paved over the wetlands that would drain the water.

The toll on human life and health so far has been small relative to what the images suggest. Authorities have cited thirty known deaths as of Tuesday night, while 13,000 people have been rescued. President Donald Trump—who this month undid an Obama-era requirement that infrastructure projects be constructed to endure rising sea levels—offered swift reassurance on Twitter: "Major rescue operations underway!" and "Spirit of the people is incredible. Thanks!"

But the impact of hurricanes on health is not captured in the mortality and morbidity numbers in the days after the rain. This is typified by the inglorious problem of mold.

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, a New Orleans resident poses in his mold-infested home. (Alex Brandon / AP)

Submerging a city means introducing a new ecosystem of fungal growth that will change the health of the population in ways we are only beginning to understand. The same infrastructure and geography that have kept this water from dissipating created a uniquely prolonged period for fungal overgrowth to take hold, which can mean health effects that will bear out over years and lifetimes.

The documented dangers of excessive mold exposure are many. Guidelines issued by the World Health Organization note that living or working amid mold is associated with respiratory symptoms, allergies, asthma, and immunological reactions. The document cites a wide array of "inflammatory and toxic responses after exposure to microorganisms isolated from damp buildings, including their spores, metabolites, and components," as well as evidence that mold exposure can increase risks of rare conditions like hypersensitivity pneumonitis, allergic alveolitis, and chronic sinusitis.

A potentially dangerous species of mold grows in an apartment in Kenner, Louisiana, after Hurricane Katrina. (Lucas Jackson / Reuters)

Twelve years ago in New Orleans, Katrina similarly rendered most homes unlivable, and it created a breeding ground for mosquitoes and the diseases they carry, and caused a shortage of potable water and food. But long after these threats to human health were addressed, the mold exposure, in low-income neighborhoods in particular, continued.

The same is true in parts of Brooklyn, where mold overgrowth has reportedly worsened in the years since Hurricane Sandy. In the Red Hook neighborhood, a community report last October found that a still-growing number of residents were living in moldy apartments.

Brent Davis helps clean out a home damaged by floodwaters from Hurricane Matthew in Nichols, South Carolina, in October 2016. (Mike Spencer / AP)

The highly publicized "toxic mold"—meaning the varieties that send mycotoxins into the air, the inhaling of which can acutely sicken anyone—causes most concern right after a flood. In the wake of Hurricane Matthew in South Carolina last year, sludge stood feet deep in homes for days. As it receded, toxic black mold grew. In one small community, Nichols, it was more the mold than the water itself that left the town's 261 homes uninhabitable for months.

Researchers from the National Resources Defense Council held a press conference after Katrina about dangerously high levels of mold spores in the air. The group accused the Environmental Protection Agency of focusing only on exposures like

arsenic, lead, asbestos, and pollutants such as those found in gasoline, while ignoring mold exposure.

The overwhelmed EPA did at the time issue radio announcements and distribute brochures encouraging people to wear respirators when reentering flooded buildings, particularly when cleaning and ripping out drywall. These are occupational exposures that fall mainly on manual laborers.

A sommelier in New Orleans displays a mold-damaged bottle of Opus One 1997 after Katrina. (Gerald Herbert / AP)

The more insidious and ubiquitous molds, though, produce no acutely dangerous mycotoxins but can still trigger inflammatory reactions, allergies, and asthma. The degree of impact from these exposure in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina is still being studied.

Molds also emit volatile chemicals that some experts believe could affect the human nervous system. Among them is Joan Bennett, a distinguished professor of plant biology and pathology at Rutgers University, who has devoted her career to

the study of fungal toxins. She was living in New Orleans during the storm, and she recalls that while some health experts were worried about heavy-metal poisoning or cholera, she was worried about fungus.

"I'm still surprised it didn't receive more attention from the scientific community, she said in a recent interview. "The city was rife with mold; everything organic decayed. A few people did some very superficial spore counts and they were off the scale, but at the time almost no one studied it because the focus was elsewhere. So I did my own study."

The smell of the fungi in her house got so strong after the flooding that it gave her headaches and made her nauseated. As she evacuated, wearing a mask and gloves, she took samples of the mold along with her valued possessions. Her lab at Rutgers went on to report that the volatile organic compounds emitted by the mold, known as mushroom alcohol, had some bizarre effects on fruit flies. For one, they affected genes involved in handling and transporting dopamine in a way that mimicked the pathology of Parkinson's disease in humans.

"More biologists ought to be looking at gas-phase compounds, because I'm quite certain we'll find a lot of unexpected effects that we've been ignoring," said Bennett.

After Hurricane Rita in 2005, a resident of Groves, Texas, appears in his moldy living room. (David J. Phillip / AP)

This is where Trump's words in support of Houston ring hollow.

Under his administration, the funding of science to better understand the health consequences of mold exposure stands to be slashed. Meanwhile, the significance of mold in human lives is expected to increase with rising sea levels and catastrophic weather events. The perennial intensification of severe weather patterns over the Gulf Coast has made flooding increasingly common, at least partly due to the warming of the ocean.

The Environmental Protection Agency, which would typically be tasked with mitigating the health effects of mold in Houston, is currently uprooting the regulations intended to reduce carbon emissions that raise the likelihood of severe weather events. The agency stands only less equipped now to deal with environmental mold contamination than it did in New Orleans.

In Houston, short-term rescue funding is essential to saving lives, and supporting it is politically necessary. But most of the looming threats to human wellbeing will outlast the immediate displays of concern. They will play out when the water and the cameras are gone, and when emergency funds allocated to Houston are exhausted. Mold will mark the divide between people who can afford to escape it and people for whom the storm doesn't end.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Business

This miracle weed killer was supposed to save farms. Instead, it's devastating them.

By Caitlin Dewey August 29 at 5:38 PM

BLYTHEVILLE, ARK. — Clay Mayes slams on the brakes of his Chevy Silverado and jumps out with the engine running, yelling at a dogwood by the side of the dirt road as if it had said something insulting.

Its leaves curl downward and in on themselves like tiny, broken umbrellas. It's the telltale mark of inadvertent exposure to a controversial herbicide called dicamba.

"This is crazy. Crazy!" shouts Mayes, a farm manager, gesticulating toward the shriveled canopy off Highway 61. "I just think if this keeps going on . . ."

"Everything'll be dead," says Brian Smith, his passenger.

The damage here in northeast Arkansas and across the Midwest — sickly soybeans, trees and other crops — has become emblematic of a deepening crisis in American agriculture.

Farmers are locked in an arms race between ever-stronger weeds and ever-stronger weed killers.

The dicamba system, approved for use for the first time this spring, was supposed to break the cycle and guarantee weed control in soybeans and cotton. The herbicide — used in combination with a genetically modified dicamba-resistant soybean — promises better control of unwanted plants such as pigweed, which has become resistant to common weed killers.

The problem, farmers and weed scientists say, is that dicamba has drifted from the fields where it was sprayed, damaging millions of acres of unprotected soybeans and other crops in what some are calling a man-made disaster. Critics say that the herbicide was approved by federal officials without enough data, particularly on the critical question of whether it could drift off target.

Government officials and manufacturers Monsanto and BASF deny the charge, saying the system worked as Congress designed it.

The backlash against dicamba has spurred lawsuits, state and federal investigations, and one argument that ended in a farmer's shooting death and related murder charges.

"This should be a wake-up call," said David Mortensen, a weed scientist at Pennsylvania State University.

Herbicide-resistant weeds are thought to cost U.S. agriculture millions of dollars per year in lost crops.

After the Environmental Protection Agency approved the updated formulation of the herbicide for use this spring and summer, farmers across the country planted more than 20 million acres of dicamba-resistant soybeans, according to Monsanto.

But as dicamba use has increased, so too have reports that it "volatilizes," or re-vaporizes and travels to other fields. That harms nearby trees, such as the dogwood outside Blytheville, as well as nonresistant soybeans, fruits and vegetables, and plants used as habitats by bees and other pollinators.

According to a 2004 assessment, dicamba is 75 to 400 times more dangerous to off-target plants than the common weed killer glyphosate, even at very low doses. It is particularly toxic to soybeans — the very crop it was designed to protect — that haven't been modified for resistance.

Kevin Bradley, a University of Missouri researcher, estimates that more than 3.1 million acres of soybeans have been damaged by dicamba in at least 16 states, including major producers such as Iowa, Illinois and Minnesota. That figure is probably low, according to researchers, and it represents almost 4 percent of all U.S. soybean acres.

"It's really hard to get a handle on how widespread the damage is," said Bob Hartzler, a professor of agronomy at Iowa State University. "But I've come to the conclusion that [dicamba] is not manageable."

The dicamba crisis comes on top of lower-than-forecast soybean prices and 14 straight quarters of declining farm income. The pressures on farmers are intense.

One Arkansas man is facing murder charges after he shot a farmer who had come to confront him about dicamba drift, according to law enforcement officials.

Thirty minutes down the road, Arkansas farmer Wally Smith is unsure how much more he can take.

Smith's farm employs five people — including his son, Hughes, his nephew, Brian, and the farm manager, Mayes. None of the men are quite sure what else they'd do for work in this corner of Mississippi County.

Dicamba has hit the Blytheville — pronounced "Bly-vul" — region hard. For miles in any direction out of town, the soybeans that stretch from the road to the distant tree line are curled and stunted. A nearby organic farm suspended its summer sales after finding dicamba contamination in its produce.

At the Smiths' farm, several thousand acres of soybeans are growing too slowly because of dicamba, representing losses on a $2 million investment.

"This is a fact," the elder Smith said. "If the yield goes down, we'll be out of business."

The new formulations of dicamba were approved on the promise that they were less risky and volatile than earlier versions.

Critics say that the approval process proceeded without adequate data and under enormous pressure from state agriculture departments, industry groups and farmers associations. Those groups said that farmers desperately needed the new herbicide to control glyphosate-resistant weeds, which can take over fields and deprive soybeans of sunlight and nutrients.

Such weeds have grown stronger and more numerous over the past 20 years — a result of herbicide overuse. By spraying so much glyphosate, farmers inadvertently caused weeds to evolve resistant traits more quickly.

The new dicamba formulations were supposed to attack those resistant weeds without floating to other fields.

But during a July 29 call with EPA officials, a dozen state weed scientists expressed unanimous concern that dicamba is more volatile than manufacturers have indicated, according to several scientists on the call. Field tests by researchers at the Universities of Missouri, Tennessee and Arkansas have since found that the new dicamba herbicides can volatilize and float to other fields as long as 72 hours after application.

Regulators did not have access to much of this data. Although Monsanto and BASF submitted hundreds of studies to the EPA, only a handful of reports considered volatility in a real-world field setting, as opposed to a greenhouse or a lab, according to regulatory filings. Under EPA rules, manufacturers are responsible for funding and conducting the safety tests the agency uses to evaluate products.

And although pesticide-makers often supply new products to university researchers to conduct field tests in varied environments, Monsanto acknowledged it did not allow that testing on its commercialized dicamba because it did not want to delay registration, and scientists said BASF limited it.

Frustrated scientists say that allowed chemical companies to cherry-pick the data available to regulators.

"Monsanto in particular did very little volatility field work," said Jason Norsworthy, an agronomy professor at the University of Arkansas who was denied access to test the volatility of Monsanto's product.

The EPA and chemical manufacturers deny that there was anything amiss in the dicamba approval process.

“The applicant for registration is required to submit the required data to support registration,” the agency said in a statement. “Congress placed this obligation on the pesticide manufacturer rather than requiring others to develop and fund such data development.”

Manufacturers say that volatility is not to blame. In a statement, BASF spokeswoman Odessa Patricia Hines said the company brought its dicamba product to market “after years of research, farm trials and reviews by universities and regulatory authorities.”

Scott Partridge, Monsanto’s vice president of global strategy, thinks some farmers have illegally sprayed older, more volatile dicamba formulations or used the herbicide with the wrong equipment.

The company, which invested $1 billion in dicamba production plants last year, has deployed a fleet of agronomists and climate scientists to figure out what went wrong.

“We’re visiting every grower and every field,” Partridge said. “If there are improvements that can be made to this product, we’re going to do it.”

Regulators in the most-affected states are also taking action. In July, Arkansas banned spraying for the remainder of the season and raised the penalties on illegal applications.

Missouri and Tennessee have tightened their rules on dicamba use, while nearly a dozen states have complained to the EPA.

The agency signaled in early August that it might consider taking the new dicamba herbicides off the market, according to several scientists who spoke to regulators.

The agency would not comment directly on its plans. “EPA is very concerned about the recent reports of crop damage related to the use of dicamba in Arkansas and elsewhere,” an agency representative said.

Meanwhile, a class-action lawsuit alleges that dicamba manufacturers misrepresented the risk of their products. The Smiths are considering signing up. Monsanto says the suit is baseless.

There are also early indications that dicamba may not work for long. Researchers have shown that pigweed can develop dicamba resistance within as few as three years. Suspected instances of dicamba-resistant pigweed have been found in Tennessee and Arkansas.

A spokeswoman for Monsanto said the company was “not aware of any confirmed instances of pigweed resistance” to dicamba.

Some critics of chemical-intensive agriculture have begun to see the crisis as a parable — and a prediction — for the future of farming in the United States. Scott Faber, a vice president at the Environmental Working Group, said farmers have become

“trapped on a chemical treadmill” driven by the biotech industry. Many farmers say they think they could not continue farming without new herbicide technology.

“We’re on a road to nowhere,” said Nathan Donley, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity. “The next story is resistance to a third chemical, and then a fourth chemical — you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to see where that will end.

“The real issue here is that people are using ever-more complicated combinations of poisons on crops, with ever-more complex consequences.”

In Blytheville, at least, one consequence is increasingly obvious: It’s a short, scraggly plant with cupped green leaves and a few empty pods hanging near its stem. At this time of year, this plant should have more pods and be eight inches taller, Mayes said.

“This is what we’re dealing with here,” he said, before shaking his head and turning back to his truck. “We go to work every day wondering if next year we’re still going to have a job.”

326 Comments

Caitlin Dewey is the food policy writer for Wonkblog. Subscribe to her daily newsletter: tinyletter.com/cdewey.
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Coastal erosion

Louisiana fights the sea, and loses

That has lessons for America's climate-change policy

New York Times/Eyevine

Print edition | United States Aug 26th 2017 | BATON ROUGE AND ISLE DE JEAN CHARLES

WHEN Roosevelt Falgout was a boy, the brackish water that now laps within a few feet of his three-room cabin at Isle de Jean Charles was miles off. "There were only trees all around, far as you could see," recalls the 81-year-old former oyster fisherman, at home on the Isle, a sliver of land in the vast marsh that covers much of southern Louisiana. He and his village's other men and boys, who are members of the French-speaking Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw tribe, used to hunt and trap muskrat and mink in those oak and hackberry forests.

But salty water, seeping northward from the Gulf of Mexico, killed the trees off long ago; just a few blackened stumps remain, protruding from the open water that now surrounds the Isle. With even a modest storm liable to flood the island and the narrow causeway that connects it to higher ground, the village has become almost uninhabitable. Mr Falgout's 81-year-old wife, Rita, says she lies awake at night worrying that her husband, who has cancer among other ailments, will have a medical emergency during a flood. "It's become too frightening here," she says of her ancestral home, sitting amid a clutter of family photographs, Native American beadwork and Catholic saints. The Isle's 60 residents are due to be resettled further inland, in a $48m programme approved by the state government last year, and Mrs Falgout says she cannot wait to go.

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The briny intrusion that has put paid to the Choctaw village is devastating southern Louisiana. Between 1932 and 2010 the state lost more than 1,800 square miles (470,000 hectares) of land to the sea, representing about 80% of America's coastal erosion over the period. Recent losses have been especially severe because of an increase in big storms raging in from the Gulf of Mexico — such as Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, which led to the inundation of New Orleans and 1,836 deaths. Between 2004 and 2008 alone, Louisiana shrank by more than 300 square miles.

This is one of America's biggest environmental crises. Louisiana contains some of the world's most extensive wetlands, home to a fifth of North America's waterfowl. It is an economic and human disaster, too. The threatened coastal area is home to 2m people and a hub of the oil-and-gas industry. It is also the main export point for liquefied natural gas (LNG), the form in which American shale gas is shipped abroad. Southern Louisiana contains five of America's 12 busiest ports and billions of dollars of oil-and-gas infrastructure, including 16 petroleum refineries and thousands of miles of pipeline. In Cameron Parish, one of the state's nine coastal districts, all of which are being eroded by the sea,

$30 bn-worth of new or repurposed LNG infrastructure is under construction. According to a new report by RAND Corporation, a think-tank, infrastructure in the state worth up to $136 bn could be threatened by land loss and increased storm damage, a related threat.

Such numbers focus attention. The effort to shore up Louisiana against the hungry sea, which is run by a state body, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana (CPRA), but combines many federal, state and local efforts, costs around a billion dollars a year. In one of America's most Republican states, it is also bipartisan, well-managed and impeccably science-based.

Over the past decade the CPRA has restored 36,000 acres of marshland and dredged up 60 miles of artificial islands, to provide a buffer for the coastline. The agency's latest five-year action plan, approved in April, includes 124 planned or active projects, designed to restore or protect an additional 800 square miles of land over the next half-century, at a cost of $50 bn. American taxpayers will cover most of that; BP, an oil firm, will provide $15 bn, as compensation for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. The plan was approved without a whisper of dissent from the legislature, even though parts of it read like a publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, on whose sea-level-rise projections it is indeed based. With its "long-term view, consideration of climate change, and integration of natural systems and community resilience", the CPRA claims its report "leads the nation in ecosystem-restoration thinking."

Many scientists would agree. "No other state has a science-based, environmental restoration and protection project of this rigour," says Justin Ehrenwerth, a former member of Barack Obama's administration, who now runs the Water Institute of the Gulf, a research outfit in Baton Rouge dedicated to mitigating coastal erosion. Many Republicans also agree. "I can't choose the best investment without using the best available science," says Garret Graves, a former head of the CPRA, who now represents Louisiana's sixth district in the House of Representatives. "I've heard people in this building say sea-level rise isn't happening," he says, seated in his office on Capitol Hill. "I can tell you it is, because I've measured it." Such bipartisan consensus, rare in America on any issue, is especially striking on one fundamentally linked to global warming, which many Republicans profess not to believe in. This makes Louisiana's

coastal trials, even beyond their environmental and economic significance, an important indicator of how American policymakers will respond to the worsening effects of climate change.

Flowing out, flowing in

To understand what is causing the inundation, consider how the land was made. Most of southern Louisiana, as well as parts of seven other states, including Arkansas, Mississippi and Missouri, form the Mississippi deltaic plain, a fertile region created over the past 8,000 years by the Mississippi bursting its banks, slowing, and then depositing sediments over the surrounding area. The vastness of the plain—Louisiana's coastline alone is 400 miles long—reflects the Mississippi's huge reach and sediment load; the river, which drains 41% of the contiguous United States, is estimated to transport around 400m tonnes of sediment a year. It also reflects how dynamic the Mississippi is. As it meandered through its delta, the river, for most of those millennia, constantly changed its course through siltation and erosion. Every 1,000 years or so, it abandoned its main channel for one of its distributaries. A time series of the Mississippi's course looks like a sinuous Celtic knot, with a swathe of interwoven curves, flowing to the sea.

Widespread flooding is not compatible with modern living, however. The first levees of the Mississippi were thrown up around New Orleans in the 18th century. After flooding in 1927 displaced over 600,000 people, Congress ordered almost every untamed reach of the river to be straitjacketed by earthworks. Over 1,500 miles of levees were constructed, confining the Mississippi from its source in Minnesota almost to its mouth. This has had some beneficial effects. It has made the river's course more predictable for shipping and accelerated its flow, mitigating the effects of siltation. But it has starved the delta region of the sediment deposits to which it owes its existence.

This alone would be sufficient to cause massive erosion. But two other man-made factors have meanwhile boosted the corrosive power of the sea — they in to the Mississippi's sway.

Since natural gas was first observed bubbling from a rice paddy in coastal Louisiana in 1901, thousands of oil wells have been sunk into the wetlands. To reach them, almost as many canals have been dredged from the Gulf by energy companies. These channels have injected seams of saline water deep into the marshes, killing plants which tolerate only fresh or brackish water, such as the marsh and woodland species that once surrounded Isle de Jean Charles. This has in turn reduced the amount of organic matter the marshes produce, which acts as a counterweight to another reductive process, the constant settling and compacting of the organic platform that raises the marshland above the water table.

At Point-Aux-Chenes, another Native American village a couple of miles inland from the Isle, this transformation is vividly apparent. The small bayou, or waterway, running beside the village has turned salty and almost laps at the road alongside it. The live oaks that gave the village its name ("chêne" means "oak" in French) are giving way to marsh reeds and other estuarine species. As your correspondent surveyed the waterway, a pair of bottlenose dolphins—apex predators in estuarine conditions—arched gracefully from the water.

Starved of silt, and with less new organic matter to counteract its settling, coastal Louisiana is sinking back into its former watery state. Meanwhile, because of melting polar ice caps and thermal expansion, the sea level is rising. In the past decade the observed relative sea-level rise in coastal Louisiana—a figure that combines the effects of rising seas and subsiding land—was over a centimetre a year, or around four times the global average. The delta's system of land creation has thus been thrown into reverse. In 1930, despite much engineering of the Mississippi's channel, Louisiana was expanding by almost a square mile a year. Since then, an area the size of Delaware has been lost to the Gulf.

Much of the CPRA's work involves dredging up sediment where it is abundant, including under the sea, and piping it to areas of threatened marshland. Behind an artificial beach in Cameron Parish, Brett Dupuis, a project manager for Weeks Marine, a dredging company, is working on a $31m project to restore 740 acres (300 hectares) of submerged marsh, which was inundated by the sea during Hurricane Rita in 2005. For three months his dredging platform, two miles offshore, has been sucking up dirt from the sea bed and piping it ashore. The

result, where open water used to be, is a bed of grey ooze up to ten feet deep, with a slurpy fountain of gunk where the dredging pipe empties into it. "Good thick stuff," nods Mr Dupuis approvingly, as laughing gulls and brown pelicans wheel and chatter overhead.

Welcoming back the water

It is heartening to observe a habitat formed over centuries being recreated in a few weeks. It also illustrates how Canute-like this approach is. Thousands of square miles of Louisiana are in the process of disappearing; they cannot be replaced by diesel-powered engines an acre at a time. Or, as Mel Landry of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration puts it, while inspecting Mr Dupuis's progress: "We've got more work to do than we could ever pay for."

Even assuming the CPRA gets the $50bn it is angling for, it predicts another 1,450 square miles of Louisiana will be lost over the next 50 years. That also assumes the agency is permitted to carry out a more ambitious and controversial sort of marsh-regeneration project, by carving floodgates into the Mississippi's levees and, at times when the river's sediment load is high, opening them to inundate the silt-starved plain. The most advanced such scheme, known as the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, would create a channel from the Mississippi, south of New Orleans, capable of funnelling 75,000 cubic feet (2.1m litres) of silty water per second into badly eroded Plaquemines Parish. In full flow, the channel would carry water equivalent to the seventh-largest river in America. The scheme would cost $1bn and is currently being appraised by the US Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the management of the Mississippi's levees.

To preserve southern Louisiana in something close to its current shape, many such diversions might be required. Experts enthusiastically say they could reconnect the river to the delta; others doubt they would work as intended because, as a result of dams and dredging upstream, about half the Mississippi's sediment no longer reaches its lower course. The boosters are probably right a big distributary of the Mississippi, the Atchafalaya, which siphons off about a third of the river's water and more of its sediment load in central Louisiana, has had its basin leveed, but not its banks, and it is making land. Yet resistance to the mooted diversions is fierce.

Such schemes were first discussed in the 1990s, when the scale of the land loss began to be recognised by policymakers. They have since been blocked by a couple of well-organised groups, led by the state's powerful oyster farmers, who have crept further inland with the estuarine conditions in which oysters thrive, and do not want to see their stocks wiped out by a gush of muddy water.

The Corps of Engineers, a slow-moving bureaucracy that distrusts green infrastructure and is reluctant to build floodgates in its levees, presents a different challenge. It says it will take five years merely to review the feasibility of the Mid-Barataria scheme. At the current rate of loss—about a football-field of land every hour—Louisiana will change a lot while the agency deliberates. "The Corps is incapable of responding with the necessary urgency to the coastal erosion crisis in Louisiana," says Congressman Graves. "The main reason for the erosion is levee-building. I am amazed that the Corps has no sense of guilt about their responsibility. They have an obligation to fix what they broke."

The damaging effect of the levees was predicted. Weighing the benefits of engineering the Mississippi in 1897, a former president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, E.L. Corthell, noted the need to take into account "withholding by the levees...of the annual contributions of sedimentary matters" and, because of this, "subsidence of the Gulf delta lands below the level of the sea and their gradual abandonment." But while he warned that "the present generation should not be selfish," Mr Corthell assumed the economic benefits of protecting the floodzone would "be so remarkable that people of the whole United States can well afford, when the time comes, to build a protective levee against the Gulf waters."

That illustrates two related weaknesses in much environmental policymaking: an assumption that future politicians will take a longer-term view than current ones, and an excessive willingness to discount the future costs of solving environmental problems caused today. President Donald Trump, though eager to splurge $20bn on an unnecessary border wall, appears not to have given thought to the seawall Mr Corthell envisaged. In any event, it is doubtful such a scheme would be affordable or otherwise practical, considering the effects of rising sea levels and fiercer storms, both consequences of global warming, which the Republican president either does not believe in or care about

In a dither

Some of the hoped-for diversions, at least, will probably be built. The political consensus in Louisiana for such action is apparent at every level of government. "We're all pulling together on this," says Ryan Bourriaque, the administrator of Cameron Parish. "It's a great example of how industry, conservationists and different government agencies can all marry." Mr Graves, who recently became chairman of a House subcommittee that oversees the Corps of Engineers, will also chivvy it relentlessly. Yet anyone looking to Louisiana for hope that America will develop a more rational climate policy is liable to be frustrated. The state's impressive coastal policy illustrates America's ability to adapt to a natural disaster that is already upon it. It does not seem to have nudged the state, or the Republican Party, any closer to policies that might slow the warming that is contributing to that disaster.

Louisiana's former governor, Bobby Jindal, was a strong supporter of the CPRA. While preparing to run for the Republican presidential ticket in 2016, he nonetheless described climate change as a "Trojan Horse" for a left-wing power grab: "It's an excuse for somewhere who never liked free-market economies and never liked rapid economic growth." Mr Graves, remarkably, given how averse he seems to talking nonsense on scientific matters, says he shares that view. He also, despite his reliance on the IPCC's sea-rise projections, says he does not accept the scientific body's consensus that most of the observed recent warming is caused by human activities.

The way things were

To plan hugely expensive government action on the basis of the latest climate projections, but at the same time to claim the science underpinning them is too weak to justify curbing greenhouse-gas emissions, as most climate scientists recommend, is at best inconsistent. Perhaps it truly reflects Mr Graves's thinking. It also seems possible that he wants to keep onside the energy companies which provide around 40,000 jobs in Louisiana and donate generously to his political campaigns. Those firms are responsible, directly and indirectly — through their canal-dredging and because of the greenhouse-gas

emissions they facilitate—for a lot of Louisiana's coastal erosion. Yet Mr Graves, moral scourge of the bureaucratic Corps, is also opposed to several ongoing legal campaigns to make the companies pay compensation for the damage they have caused.

It is hard to make sense of this, except perhaps by recourse to Mr Cornell. The present generation should not be selfish. But it always is.

This article appeared in the United States section of the print edition under the headline "Mississippi blues"

Safer approach detailed to reduce nitrogen in plant discharge

Dianne L Stallings, Ruidoso News Published 2:22 p.m. MT Aug. 29, 2017 | Updated 3:03 p.m. MT Aug. 29, 2017

Plant manager seeks ways to safely reduce nitrogen in the discharge to the Rio Ruidoso

(Photo: Dianne Stallings/Ruidoso News)

In a continuing effort to improve safety while attempting to meet new stringent federal and state nitrogen standards imposed on the discharge into the Rio Ruidoso of the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, operators of the Ruidoso facility are switching to a new carbon source.

“The first carbon source we were going to use to aid in the reduction of total nitrogen was a methanol, but because of the explosive properties of it and safety issues, we moved to a glycerin-based carbon source, which is a lot safer,” Plant Manager Isaac Garcia said during a meeting last week of the Joint Use Board that oversees the operation of the plant. The board consists of members from Ruidoso and the city of Ruidoso Downs.

The cost of purchasing the material may be more, but with no safety issues tagged to the new carbon source, “we won’t need the fire department to be locked and loaded at all times,” Garcia said. “I think basically, it is a sugar glycerin-type product.”

The price will be about $7,000 per load based on bids he’s seen, and the material will be coming from Massachusetts within the next few weeks, he said.

“We’ll start playing with it and hopefully, getting our nitrogen level down to the limit to be in compliance (with the amount allowed by the Environmental Protection Agency and New Mexico Environment Department),” Garcia said.

“Your target in that regard is the newly established through mediation?” Mayor Tom Battin, JUB chairman, asked.

The number will be based on a 30-day average flow coming into the treatment plant, Garcia replied. His goal is to meet the figure imposed, which was slightly relaxed since the initial ruling that the plant would have to post the lowest nitrogen discharge in the nation.

Garcia later explained that the previous permit cycle for total nitrogen was determined by temperature.

"When the influent temperature was greater than 13°C, the total nitrogen limit was 4.0 mg/L (milligrams per liter)," he said. "This limit was usually during spring and summer months. When the influent temperature was less than 13°C, the total nitrogen limit was 6.0 mg/L. This limit was usually during fall and winter months.

"The original limit for this upcoming permit cycle was supposed to be an unachievable 1.0mg/L, and then changed to a pound per day limit of 37.1. The promise of the village of Ruidoso and city of Ruidoso Downs to connect a number of sewer onsite systems persuaded the EPA to change the 37.1 pounds per day to 37.8 pounds per day. This limit will not be easily achieved even with the sophistication of a $32 million dollar (membrane bioreactor) facility.

Deputy Village Manager Ron Sena the five-year permit requires the village to have owners dismantle at least 200 current septic systems and hook up as new connections to the sewer lines leading to the treatment plant.

"Methanol, which is a carbon source usually used in the removal of total nitrogen will not be used, because of its extreme flammable characteristics, making it dangerous to the operators of the facility," Garcia said. "The carbon source which will be used in place of methanol is a glycerin called MicroC, which is not as hazardous as methanol. With careful operations, the addition of the MicroC and various tests of the effluent, we should be able to meet the 37.8lbs per day."

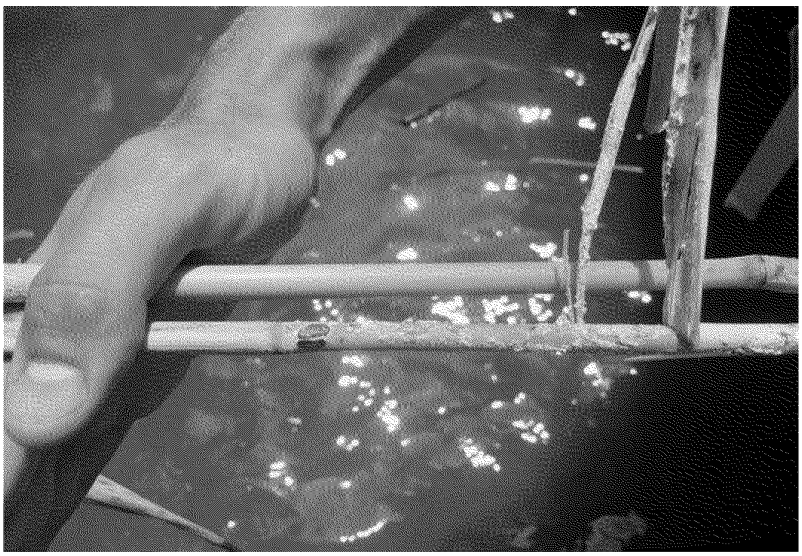
He told JUB members last week, “I hope by adding this carbon source and by doing three samples each month, that we get the dosage right to get (the nitrogen level) down where we need to,” Garcia said. “I’m confident we will meet the phosphorous (limit) and everything else. It’s the nitrogen that is the biggest challenge.”

More costs also will be involved to increase the number of tests for the pollutants, “but we already have quotes for that and have found a lab that can test for those and give us quick results,” he said.

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

Louisiana coast's insect invader has no taste for sugar cane

Comment Posted on August 30, 2017 at 6:30 AM



A stalk of roseau cane in south Plaquemines Parish shows heavy infestation from a scale insect from Asia.

By Tristan Baurick, tbaurick@nola.com,
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

The plague of insects decimating roseau cane marshes in coastal Louisiana might not be a threat after all to roseau's cash-crop cousin. Recent tests by the Louisiana State University AgCenter indicate the tiny sap-sucking pest, known as a scale or mealybug, has little interest in sugar cane, one of Louisiana's most important agricultural products.

Scientists and growers had been worried for months that the scale would switch from roseau cane to the closely related sugar cane as it advanced from Plaquemines Parish to other parts of south Louisiana. But when AgCenter researcher Blake Wilson released the scale, a native of Japan and China, on sugar cane growing in quarantined greenhouses in Baton Rouge, the scale didn't much like the sweet stuff.

"We looked at a couple different varieties of sugar cane, but we were not able to establish that sugar cane would not be a probable host," he said. The AgCenter is also conducting tests with other common Louisiana crops, including sorghum, corn and rice.

The AgCenter's findings made sugar growers cautiously optimistic. "There's always the element of the unknown, but [Wilson's] preliminary results suggest the scale will not be a concern for us," said Herman Waguespack, Jr. of the Thibodaux-based American Sugar Cane League.

The scale's destructive prowess was first noticed late last year in the vast roseau cane stands at the mouth of the Mississippi River in south Plaquemines. Since then, the scale has damaged or killed more than 100,000 acres and spread to at least 10 other parishes and the Bay St. Louis area of Mississippi.

Roseau is a critically important wetland plant. It resists erosion and flooding, and it acts as a land builder by catching and holding passing river sediment. Scale-hit stands are converting to open water in coastal areas already facing rapid land loss from sea level rise, natural subsidence and other factors.

Scientists say the loss of roseau might make the coast less resilient to hurricanes, degrade wildlife habitat, alter shipping channels and expose protected oil and gas infrastructure to storms and waves.

It's unclear how to stop the scale. A $378,000 research initiative proposed by the AgCenter in May to combat the scale has not received full funding.

Last week, a group of politicians, Plaquemines community activists and scientists urged the state to declare the rapid roseau die-off an emergency. They called for an "all hands on deck" approach that would rally state agencies and resources toward finding a solution. State leaders have indicated there's little money to fight the problem and more research might be needed before an emergency declaration is issued.

. . . . . .

Tristan Baurick covers Louisiana's coastal environment for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune. Email: tbaurick@nola.com * Twitter: @tristanbaurick * Facebook: Tristan Baurick and Louisiana Coastal Watch.

To: Traylor, Patrick[traylor.patrick@epa.gov]
Cc: Seager, Cheryl[Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov]
From: Thompson, Steve
Sent: Thur 9/14/2017 9:14:31 PM
Subject: Fwd: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

See below for a little more information on the tanks associated with the spill. Unfortunately we have not been able to obtain the specific permit through TCEQ's remote document server. The information below is from the 2015 emissions inventory and some documents obtained on TCEQ's server.
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Lundelius, Diana" <Lundelius.Diana@epa.gov>
Date: September 14, 2017 at 3:43:32 PM CDT
To: "Larson, Darrin" <Larson.Darrin@epa.gov>
Cc: "Thompson, Steve" <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

The emission source WWTANKS is the wastewater treatment and filtration system covered under Permit 6271. Emission sources 14-T-2A and 14-T-2B are wastewater equalization tanks. Minimal emissions are reported for these two tanks (0.0005 tpy VOCs). They are not covered under the permit or under another registration, so they are likely covered under PBR 106.472(2) for wastewater tanks. This PBR does not require registration. However, Permit O1554 does list applicable requirements for these two tanks, and page 15 of the initial version of the Title V permit references these tanks specifically with a letter from TCEQ dated May 14, 1996. Unfortunately, the letter was not found on the TCEQ air documents remote server.

REG[illegible]				# FLARE PILOTS	AVERAGE COMPOSITION	INSIDE DIAMETER				
RN[illegible]	ARKEMA CROSBY FACILITY	INDUSTRIAL INORGANIC CHEMICALS	EQUALIZATION 2A/B	VOC - OXYGENATED-	[illegible]E80	10	150	E	1[illegible]	
RN[illegible]	ARKEMA CROSBY FACILITY	INDUSTRIAL INORGANIC CHEMICALS	EQUALIZATION 2A/B	VOC	[illegible]E80	10	150	E	1[illegible]	

From: Larson, Darrin
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 2:53 PM
To: Lundelius, Diana <Lundelius.Diana@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

Darrin Larson
Chief, Air Permitting Enforcement Section (6EN-AA)

U.S. EPA Region 6

Office: 214-665-7115
Mobile: 972-467-5509

From: Yurk, Jeffrey
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 2:22 PM
To: Larson, Darrin <Larson.Darrin@epa.gov>
Cc: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: Arkema Crosby Plant Emissions Inventory

To: R6Press[R6Press@epa.gov]
From: Hubbard, Joseph
Sent: Mon 10/2/2017 2:32:22 PM
Subject: Daily News Digest, Monday, Oct. 2
Daily News Digest 10022017.pdf

1 — EPA: Hurricane Harvey compromised cap on toxic waste site, Texas Tribune, 9/29/17

https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/29/epa-hurricane-harvey-compromised-caps-toxic-waste-site/

The Environmental Protection Agency confirmed that rains from Hurricane Harvey damaged a temporary protective cap on a pit of toxic sludge along the San Jacinto River east of Houston, exposing "underlying waste material."

2 — Week ahead: EPA poised to deliver major ozone, climate decisions, The Hill, 9/02/17

http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/353156-week-ahead-epa-poised-to-deliver-major-ozone-climate-decisions

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is poised to deliver major regulatory decisions on ozone and climate change in the coming week. The announcements could be test cases for how EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will handle his responsibilities to regulate when he might be hesitant to impose new costs on industry.

3 — EPA finds dioxin exposed at Superfund site after storm, orders tests, Reuters, 10/02/17

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-storm-harvey-epa-superfund/epa-finds-dioxin-exposed-at-superfund-site-after-storm-orders-tests-idUSKCN1C432L

Cancer-causing dioxins leached from a Superfund site along a Texas river during Hurricane Harvey flooding, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said, triggering calls on Friday for the toxic waste to be permanently moved. The EPA ordered International Paper and Industrial Maintenance Corp, a subsidiary of Waste Management Inc, on Thursday to conduct testing to determine the extent of the leaching.

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6 — Louisiana plans to restore the dying Maurepas Swamp with water diverted from the Mississippi, Lens, 9/29/17

http://thelensnola.org/2017/09/29/louisiana-plans-to-restore-the-dying-maurepas-swamp-with-water-diverted-from-the-mississippi/

Louisiana's coastal restoration agency has gotten about $14 million to engineer a system to reconnect the Mississippi River to the Maurepas Swamp, which has been cut off from its rejuvenating floodwaters for about 80 years. The money comes from the Restore Council, established by Congress to allocate fines from the BP oil spill.

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8 — Burying our head in sand on climate change no longer an option, 9/27/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/Burying-our-head-in-sand-on-climate-change-no-12238961.php

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10 — Health Official Says Anti-Mosquito Aerial Spraying Was Successful In Harris County, Houston Public Radio, 9/29/17

https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2017/09/29/239827/health-official-says-anti-mosquito-aerial-spraying-was-successful-in-harris-county/

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11 — More wells needed in Kirtland fuel plume cleanup, Albuquerque Journal, 9/29/17

https://www.abqjournal.com/1070986/more-monitoring-wells-needed-for-kafb-fuel-plume.html

Albuquerque neighborhoods atop an underground fuel plume caused by a massive leak on Kirtland Air Force Base can expect to host more monitoring wells in the new year, officials said during a public meeting on the leak Thursday evening. Swiftly rising water table levels underground have taken 53 of about 150 of the existing wells out of commission, according to the New Mexico Environment Department.

12 To Help Save Monarchs, Oklahoma Conservationists Work to Repair a Plant's Weedy Reputation, NPR, 9/28/17

https://stateimpact.npr.org/oklahoma/2017/09/28/to-help-save-monarchs-oklahoma-conservationists-work-to-repair-a-plants-weedy-reputation/

Stephanie Henson admires her colorful backyard garden in Edmond. Approaching a pink-and-white plant, she squeals and laughs and she spots some butterflies. "Oh look, they're itty-bitty," she says. "Look at 'em!"

13 US Extends Contract For Cleanup Work At Nuclear Lab, KRWG, 9/29/17

http://krwg.org/post/us-extends-contract-cleanup-work-nuclear-lab

The U.S. Energy Department has extended a contract worth $65 million for environmental cleanup work at one of the nation's premier nuclear research laboratories. With the extension announced this week, the private consortium that runs Los Alamos National Laboratory will be paid for an additional six months of work. The contract was set to expire Saturday.

14 Uranium mines in Carson National Forest cleaned up after more than 60 years, Taos News, 9/29/17

http://www.taosnews.com/stories/uranium-mines-in-carson-national-forest-cleaned-up-after-more-than-60-years,43321

Two abandoned uranium mines in the Carson National Forest that for decades posed threats to human and ecological health have been cleaned up. The Tusas East Slope and J.O.L. mine sites are located less than a mile from each other, about 10 miles west of Tres Piedras in the national forest off of Forest Road 712.

15 Despite poor taste, Stillwater water is safe to drink according to DEQ, O Colly, 10/1/17

http://www.ocolly.com/news/despite-poor-taste-stillwater-water-is-safe-to-drink-according/article_892aae10-a6f3-11e7-8c84-e3b19a953133.html

Despite what some consider poor taste, the Stillwater plant that provides water to the city has had no functioning issues since the ammonia injectors failed last spring, city staff said. The safety of the water is of no concern to Carley Eastop, a junior chemical engineering student at Oklahoma State University. Eastop lives off campus, but does not drink city water without a filter.

region6news

Monday, October 02, 2017

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribal Nations

Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.
To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email R6Press@epa.gov.

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11 — More wells needed in Kirtland fuel plume cleanup, Albuquerque Journal, 9/29/17

https://www.abqjournal.com/1070986/more-monitoring-wells-needed-for-kafb-fuel-plume.html

Albuquerque neighborhoods atop an underground fuel plume caused by a massive leak on Kirtland Air Force Base can expect to host more monitoring wells in the new year, officials said during a public meeting on the leak Thursday evening. Swiftly rising water table levels underground have taken 53 of about 150 of the existing wells out of commission, according to the New Mexico Environment Department.

12 To Help Save Monarchs, Oklahoma Conservationists Work to Repair a Plant's Weedy Reputation, NPR, 9/28/17

https://stateimpact.npr.org/oklahoma/2017/09/28/to-help-save-monarchs-oklahoma-conservationists-work-to-repair-a-plants-weedy-reputation/
Stephanie Henson admires her colorful backyard garden in Edmond. Approaching a pink-and-white plant, she squeals and laughs and she spots some butterflies. “Oh look, they’re itty-bitty,” she says. “Look at ’em!”

13 US Extends Contract For Cleanup Work At Nuclear Lab, KRWG, 9/29/17
http://krwg.org/post/us-extends-contract-cleanup-work-nuclear-lab
The U.S. Energy Department has extended a contract worth $65 million for environmental cleanup work at one of the nation's premier nuclear research laboratories. With the extension announced this week, the private consortium that runs Los Alamos National Laboratory will be paid for an additional six months of work. The contract was set to expire Saturday.

14 Uranium mines in Carson National Forest cleaned up after more than 60 years, Taos News, 9/29/17
http://www.taosnews.com/stories/uranium-mines-in-carson-national-forest-cleaned-up-after-more-than-60-years,43321
Two abandoned uranium mines in the Carson National Forest that for decades posed threats to human and ecological health have been cleaned up. The Tusas East Slope and J.O.L. mine sites are located less than a mile from each other, about 10 miles west of Tres Piedras in the national forest off of Forest Road 712.

15 Despite poor taste, Stillwater water is safe to drink according to DEQ, O Colly, 10/1/17
http://www.ocolly.com/news/despite-poor-taste-stillwater-water-is-safe-to-drink-according/article_892aae10-a6f3-11e7-8c84-e3b19a953133.html
Despite what some consider poor taste, the Stillwater plant that provides water to the city has had no functioning issues since the ammonia injectors failed last spring, city staff said. The safety of the water is of no concern to Carley Eastop, a junior chemical engineering student at Oklahoma State University. Eastop lives off campus, but does not drink city water without a filter.

EPA: Hurricane Harvey compromised cap on toxic waste site

> The Environmental Protection Agency confirmed that rains from Hurricane Harvey damaged a temporary protective cap on a pit of toxic sludge along the San Jacinto River east of Houston, exposing "underlying waste material."

BY KIAH COLLIER SEPT. 29, 2017 11 AM

10

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits, an EPA Superfund site that is contaminated with dioxins, is located on Interstate 10 east of Houston. Michael Stravato

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has confirmed that rains from Hurricane Harvey damaged a temporary protective cap on a pit of toxic sludge along the San Jacinto

River east of Houston, exposing "underlying waste material."

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits — one of the most hazardous of Houston's many EPA Superfund sites — is contaminated with carcinogenic waste, including dioxins.

In a statement late Thursday, the EPA said samples from 14 different areas "confirmed the protective cap had been damaged and the underlying waste material was exposed. The sample showed dioxins at 70,000 ng/kg. EPA recommended clean up level for the site is 30 ng/kg."

The agency said it had directed companies responsible for the waste — International Paper Co. and Industrial Maintenance Corp. — "to conduct supplemental sampling to ensure that the exposed waste material is isolated."

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"The dioxin in the waste material does not dissolve easily in water but it can migrate further out into the surrounding sediments," the statement said. "The supplemental sampling will determine the extent, if any, of this migration."

The announcement comes after the EPA reported the cap didn't appear to be damaged, although it has said for several weeks that its dive teams were conducting additional inspections. Even before Harvey hit, Administrator Scott Pruitt deemed the cleanup of Superfund sites a priority.

In 2011, the companies responsible for the waste installed the temporary cap to contain the sludge, which had festered for more than half a century — wastewater from a now-shuttered paper mill was dumped into Houston-area waters beginning in 1965. But the armored structure has occasionally needed repairs, including a significant fix after divers found a 20-foot hole in it in 2015.

Pregnant women and young children are advised not to eat fish caught in the area.

Environmentalists and lawyers argue the temporary cap is an insufficient fix and have advocated for the material to be dredged. In 2016, the EPA proposed a plan to remove 202,000 cubic yards of dioxins and other pollutants from the 14-acre site.

"While devastating, Harvey was far from a worst-case scenario for the site, and this most recent cap failure is further evidence as to why removal of the waste is necessary," said

Rock Owens, who oversees environmental cases for the Harris County District Attorney's Office and has sued the companies over the pits.

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In 2014, Harris County and the state won a $29.2 million settlement from McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp. and Houston-based Waste Management Inc. related to the pollution — money that's been used to improve communities near the site.

Another defendant, International Paper Co., escaped penalties in the lawsuit, but Harris County appealed the decision.

In an interview Friday with Tribune CEO Evan Smith, Harvey recovery czar John Sharp said it would be a priority to mitigate similar breaches.

Business groups have opposed the removal of waste, saying the work — which could take months — would interrupt fishing and maritime operations.

JT Edwards, a spokesman for the Galveston Maritime Business Association, said such dredging could stir up toxins and, because it would take so long, would make the site vulnerable to another storm.

"Once you start dredging, you gotta finish it. What if a really, really bad superstorm shows up outside of hurricane season, what do you do about it?" he said. "Just put it in a tomb and call it a day."

In its statement, the EPA said it would "continue to provide updates about the status of the Superfund site, and continue to work with the" the responsible companies "to ensure that risk to human health and the environment is managed as best as possible."

Read related Tribune coverage:

- Watch Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's wide-ranging interview with The Texas Tribune, one month after Hurricane Harvey dumped more than 40 inches of rain, flooding entire areas of the city. [Full story]
- As efforts to rebuild have slowly begun in areas hit hard by Hurricane Harvey, officials continue to warn of lingering environmental hazards, including the health risks posed by receding floodwater. [Full story]

- When first responders were sent to the scene of a chemical fire at a manufacturing plant last week, they were never alerted to the toxic fumes in the air, a new lawsuit alleges. And the plant's parent company could face another lawsuit in the next several weeks. [Full story]

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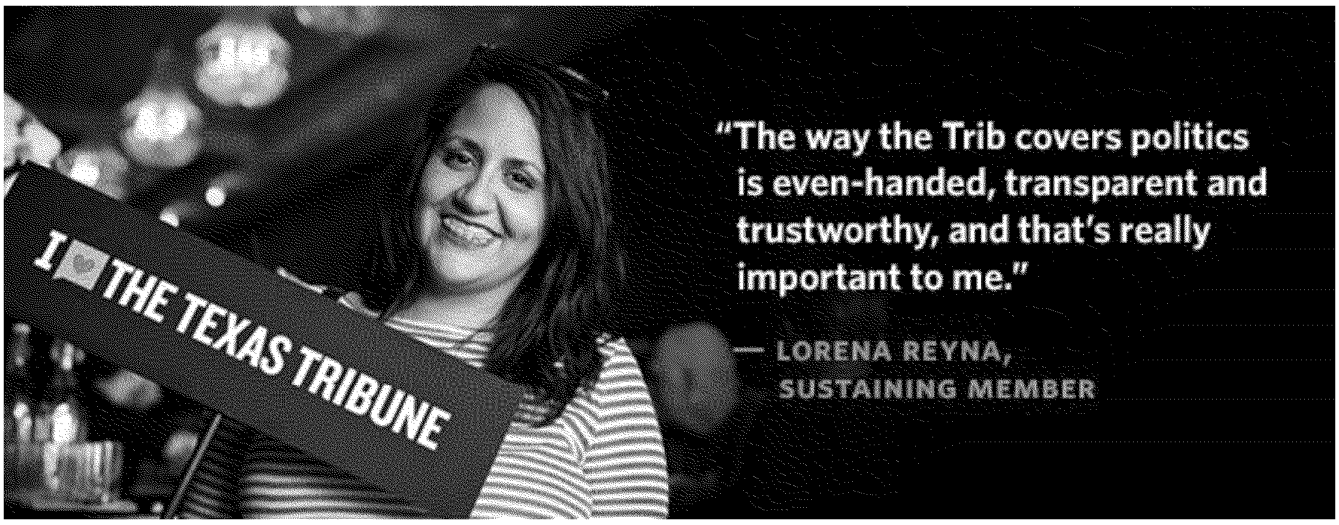

Week ahead: EPA poised to de major ozone, climate decision

BY TIMOTHY CAMA - 10/02/17 06:00 AM EDT

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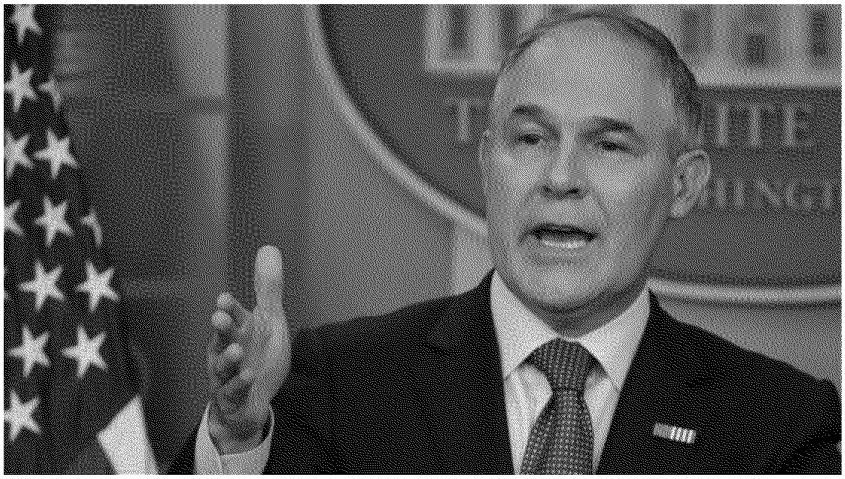

© Getty

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is poised to deliver major regulatory decisions on ozone and climate change in the coming week.

The announcements could be test cases for how EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will handle his responsibilities to regulate when he might be hesitant to impose new costs on industry.

Monday is the deadline for Pruitt to identify the areas of the country that do not meet the 2015 regulation on ground-level ozone, also known as non-attainment areas.

In his last job as Oklahoma's attorney general, Pruitt fought the 2015 rule.

Business groups say it would slow economic growth when states inevitably crack down on fossil fuel use to comply. The rule lowered the allowable ozone concentration in ambient air to 70 parts per billion, from 75 parts per billion, which the Obama administration said would improve public health.

Pruitt tried earlier this year to delay the Monday deadline by a year, sparking lawsuits from Democratic states and environmentalists. He later walked back the delay, putting Monday's deadline back in place.

Preliminary data that states submitted to the EPA in advance of Pruitt's deadline said that 214 counties do not meet the new standard, up from 177 counties under the previous rule.

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The end of the week holds another important deadline for the EPA. The agency must submit to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit an update on its effort to review the Clean Power Plan, which sought to limit carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

People familiar with the matter told The Hill this month that before the deadline hits the EPA plans to roll out a formal proposal to repeal the rule and start work on a weaker replacement regulation on carbon from power plants.

The EPA will also be in the spotlight at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

That panel is planning a Wednesday hearing to consider the nominations of four high-ranking EPA o icials: Michael Dourson to lead the chemical safety o ice, David Ross to lead the water o ice, Matthew Leopold to be general counsel, and William Wehrum to lead the air and radiation o ice.

Democrats on the panel have indicated that they see Dourson and Wehrum as the most controversial of the nominees. Both have long histories of working for the interests of the industries that they would be responsible for regulating at the EPA.

The Environment Committee will also consider the nomination of Jeffrey Baran for a new ive-year term at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, where he is already a member.

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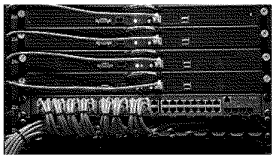
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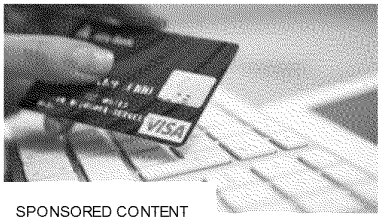
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#U.S. LEGAL NEWS
OCTOBER 2, 2017 / 6:49 AM / UPDATED AN HOUR AGO

Lawsuit against Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion starts in Canada

Ethan Lou

CALGARY, Alberta (Reuters) - A Canadian judicial review that could overturn the federal approval of Kinder Morgan Canada Ltd's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion will begin on Monday in Vancouver.

More than a dozen parties, including the company, government departments, environmental and aboriginal groups, will present their cases over two weeks before Canada's Federal Court of Appeal.

REUTERS

A decision against the C$7.4 billion ($5.9 billion) expansion would send it back for assessment, a move that would cause lengthy delays. It is rare for Canada's judiciary to review pipeline approvals.

While the court has no firm deadline for rendering a judgment, it announced its decision against Northern Gateway in June 2016, about eight months after hearings ended.

The Trans Mountain expansion would nearly triple the capacity of the existing pipeline from Canada's oil heartland of Alberta to the west coast of British Columbia. The two provinces joined the lawsuit this year on opposing sides.

The lawsuit, brought by environmental and aboriginal groups and coastal municipalities, argues that the National Energy Board (NEB) regulator did not properly review the project, neglecting to consider several environmental issues. It also claims the federal government did not properly consult affected aboriginal groups when it assessed the project.

On the other side of the lawsuit are Kinder Morgan, the federal government and the NEB. Kinder Morgan and the government did not respond to requests for comment. The regulator declined to comment.

The government has called the export of its natural resources a "fundamental" responsibility, and that it has considered many factors in approving the project, including environmental concerns and views of affected aboriginal people.

Kinder Morgan has said it went through extensive consultations with aboriginal groups and communities along the expansion's path and remains dedicated to engaging them.

Canadian crude oil producers, who are not parties to the lawsuit, say they need projects such as the Trans Mountain expansion to fetch better prices for their landlocked product.

Eugene Kung, a lawyer representing the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, a party to the lawsuit, said the results of the Enbridge case suggest Trans Mountain opponents could win the case.

Regardless of its outcome, it is likely be appealed to Canada's Supreme Court, Kung said.

$1 = 1.2537 Canadian dollars

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OCTOBER 2, 2017 / 2:22 AM / UPDATED 7 HOURS AGO

Vanuatu steps up evacuation as volcano spews ash

Reuters Staff

2017. Picture taken October 1, 2017. REUTERS/Ben Bohane

LOLOWAI, Vanuatu (Reuters) - Vanuatu hopes to evacuate all 11,000 people from its northern island of Ambae by Wednesday, with a flotilla of boats ferrying people to nearby islands as a volcano spewing rock and ash into the air threatens to erupt, disaster officials said on Monday.

Manaro Voui volcano, the South Pacific island nation's largest, was seen hurling steam and rocks into the air by New Zealand vulcanologist Brad Scott who flew over it on Saturday.

National Disaster Management Agency spokesman Michel Buleban said it was possible everyone would be off the island by Wednesday, but that would depend on the ships available.

A flotilla of small boats, barges and supply ships have ferried people off Ambae to the closest islands, Maewo, Pentecost and Espiritu Santo over the past few days.

"The evacuation of Ambae is expected to be completed over the coming days and our focus is on helping the government of Vanuatu meet the immediate needs of those who have been affected," New Zealand Foreign Minister Gerry Brownlee said on Monday.

New Zealand was airlifting tarpaulins, hygiene kits and generators to Vanuatu, while Australia was sending a Bay Class landing ship HMAS Choules, due to arrive by Wednesday.

Slideshow (6 Images)

Ash from the volcano has polluted the water in Ambae, so the Red Cross has scrambled to distribute drinking water.

"When you fly in you can see the volcano. When you land you can't see it or hear it. But you can smell the ash in the air," Cropp said.

Reporting Ben Bohane and Sonali Paul in Melbourne; Editing by Michael Perry

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Arkema plant under criminal investigation by Harris County DA's office

By Dianna Hunt, Houston Chronicle | September 29, 2017

1

Photo: Scott Olson /Getty Images

IMAGE 1 OF 6

The Arkema chemical plant — already facing multiple lawsuits over explosions of a volatile chemical in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey — is under criminal investigation by the Harris County District ... more

The Arkema chemical plant — already facing multiple lawsuits over explosions of a volatile chemical in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey — is under criminal investigation by the Harris County District Attorney's Office, officials confirmed Friday.

The Arkema plant in Crosby was inundated with 6 feet of water that wiped out its power and generators, leading to cooling failure that caused volatile organic peroxides to explode multiple times over a week.

The explosions sent pillars of fire and thick plumes of black smoke shooting up into the air. A 1.5-mile evacuation area sent residents fleeing, and more than a half-dozen first responders were sickened.

arkema chemical plant

Media: KRIV

"Companies should be on notice that we care when they pollute our air, our water, our environment," DA Kim Ogg said Friday in a written statement. "We are looking into exactly what happened at the

plant. We are gathering facts and we will apply the law. Arkema is under criminal investigation."

Arkema has already been hit with at least one lawsuit claiming first responders were left vomiting and gasping for breath after being overcome by fumes from the explosion.

The suit accuses Arkema of lacking proper procedures for keeping the chemicals cooled and failing to prepare for a major flood. It seeks at least $1 million.

Arkema has declined to comment on the lawsuit, but has repeatedly said the explosions did not pose a safety concern if residents stayed out of the evacuation area.

The company, however, has declined to provide details of its chemical inventories.

Harris County commissioners have also authorized the county to file a lawsuit against the company. The county's Pollution Control Services Department found serious violations of the Clean Air Act by Arkema, County Attorney Vince Ryan has said.

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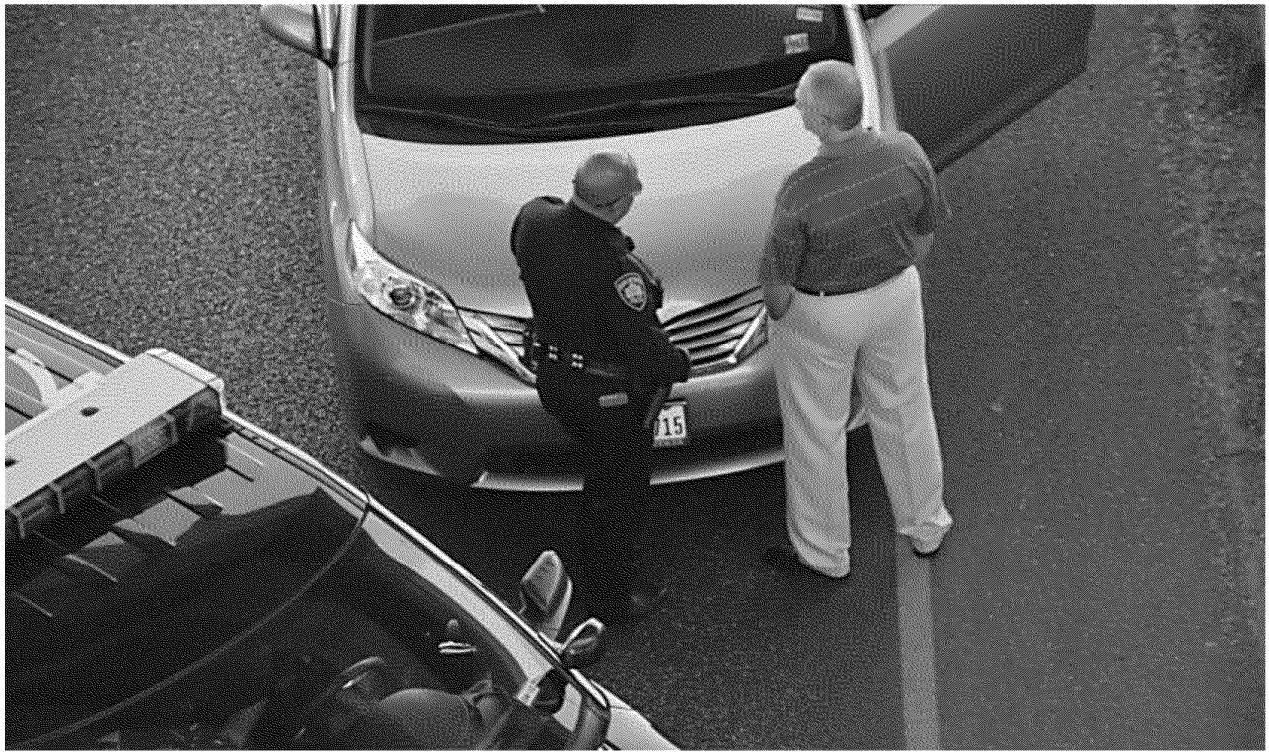

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THE LEADER IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT NEWS

EPA

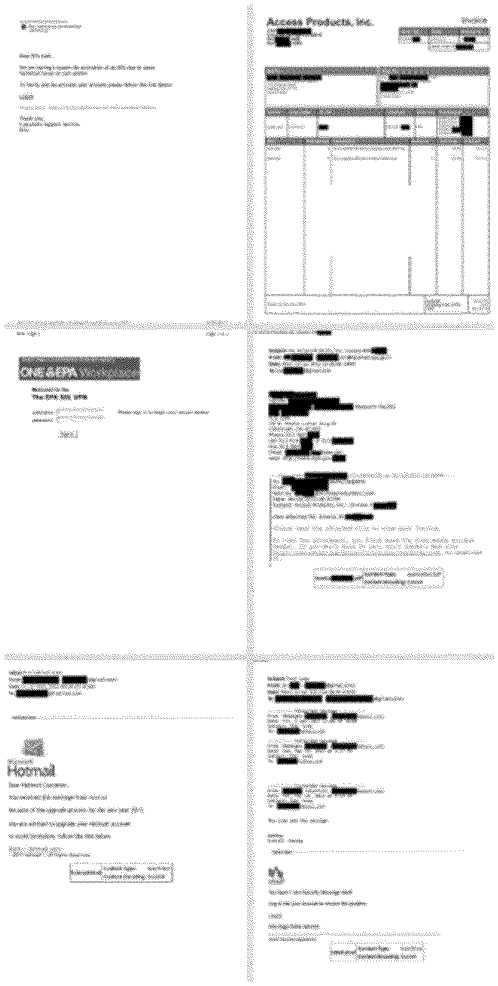
Employees targeted in 'phishing' scam — IG

Kevin Bogardus, E&E News reporter
Published: Friday, September 29, 2017

U.S. EPA employees were targeted in an elaborate "phishing" scheme by foreign hackers to buy up office supplies with stolen credit cards.

In a podcast released today by the EPA inspector general, an agent for the watchdog office described its investigation into how EPA employees were caught up in the scam.

Special Agent Al Bailey, who works in the IG's Office of Investigations, said the inspector general was first contacted by another law enforcement agency in 2012 about some unusual transactions. The unnamed agency said it had found hundreds of thousands of dollars of office supplies being ordered by EPA employees.



The U.S. EPA inspector general shared images of fake emails, websites and other records that detailed an elaborate "phishing" scam to steal agency employees' email addresses. Click here to view the documents. U.S. EPA

"These office supplies weren't being shipped to the EPA, though. They were being ordered with stolen credit cards. There was a belief that some employees may have been involved in some sort of purchasing scam," Bailey said.

"What happened was criminals based out of a foreign country were trying to make money and come up with a pretty elaborate scam to steal office supplies from the United States," he said.

Bailey said that the hackers had gathered roughly 1,700 email addresses associated with EPA employees. Then, the hackers sent an email, mocked up to look like an official EPA message, to those workers.

That email said EPA was doing a system upgrade and asked employees to click on a link to reset their log-in information. That link directed employees to a webpage — actually placed on a Mexican newspaper's website that was also hacked — where employees shared their credentials.

"When these 'phished and caught' employees typed their usernames and passwords into this made-up webpage, the bad guys got a report with the employees' username and password associated with their email address. With that information, these guys could go to EPA's real logon page and access the email accounts of these employees," Bailey said.

The hackers then sent emails under the EPA accounts to federal vendors, ordering office supplies. They also used credit card information they had stolen in a separate phishing scam to pay for those supplies.

The supplies were shipped to U.S. addresses where they were then repackaged and sent overseas to be resold at marked-up prices.

"There's actually a huge market for office supplies, and things like printer cartridges are very pricey. If you can figure out how to get free toner and then resell it, you're making quite a profit," Bailey said.

So far, one arrest has been made in the investigation, and warrants have been issued for others involved in the scheme. Bailey said the hackers have targeted other federal agencies, too.

To stop hackers, EPA employees are now required to use a two-step system of verification to identify themselves online, usually entering a password as well as inserting a physical card into the computer.

Bailey warned EPA employees to keep an eye out for suspicious emails arriving in their work inboxes.

"Just stay vigilant, and when responding to emails, don't click on any email links asking you to verify your account or stating that your accounts will be limited if you don't click on a link — unless you've initiated that process yourself," Bailey said.

Bogus links and fake emails seem to be part of the job at EPA.

Agency officials said that an email sent last month to employees saying their social media accounts were to be blocked was another phishing attempt. The email told employees to click on a link to take a survey about their social media use (*Greenwire*, Aug. 25).

The IG office has repeatedly warned that EPA is vulnerable to a cyberattack.

After all, the agency has been targeted in the past by bad actors on the internet. More than a dozen investigative reports obtained by E&E News under the Freedom of Information Act detail hackers' attempts to access EPA's computer systems in recent years (*Greenwire*, Aug. 29, 2016).

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Environment

Louisiana plans to restore the dying Maurepas Swamp with water diverted from the Mississippi

By Della Hasselle, Contributing writer September 29, 2017 12:03pm

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

There are few young trees in an unhealthy area of the Maurepas Swamp. It is suffering from a lack of freshwater from natural flooding and from the penetration of saltwater through canals dug for logging. If nothing is done, scientists say the forest will become open water over time.

Louisiana's coastal restoration agency has gotten about $14 million to engineer a system to reconnect the Mississippi River to the Maurepas Swamp, which has been cut off from its rejuvenating floodwaters for about 80 years.

The money comes from the Restore Council, established by Congress to allocate fines from the BP oil spill.

The swamp, which is mostly forested wetlands (http://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/8/3/101/htm) , has been dying for decades due to logging and the levees built along the river to prevent flooding. Canals dug to remove cypress trees have allowed saltwater to penetrate into the swamp, killing trees.

"Humans have done a really good job of messing up how the water flows to the swamp," said Melissa Baustian, a coastal ecologist for The Water Institute of the Gulf.

The grant will pay for the design and engineering of a system to carry freshwater and sediment from the river five miles north to the swamp.

When finished, it will be the first river diversion in Louisiana designed to restore swamp forest, according to researchers with the state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. Most diversions planned for Louisiana are meant to rebuild areas of marsh (https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sir20175036) that have become open water.

The Maurepas Swamp diversion is outlined in the Coastal Master Plan (http://coastal.la.gov/our-plan/2017-coastal-master-plan/), an ambitious, 50-year blueprint designed to protect and restore Louisiana's crumbling coast. (https://projects.propublica.org/larestoration/)

The coastal authority describes it as a $50 billion plan. Researchers with the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy estimate it will cost closer to $100 billion. (http://www.law.tulane.edu/uploadedFiles/Institutes_and_Centers/Water_Resources_Law_and_Policy/Content/Financing%20the%20Future%20Pt%201--The%20Cost.pdf)

The Master Plan pegs the total cost of the Maurepas Swamp diversion, located south of Lake Maurepas in St. John the Baptist Parish, at $185 million.

$185 million Estimated cost to build the diversion

70 Square miles to be restored, about a third of the swamp

Scientists say the diversion is important because the swamp is the second largest coastal forest (https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100306152418.htm) remaining in Louisiana. Experts estimate that 50 to 75 percent of bottomland hardwood forest has been lost (http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/document/32862-bottomland-hardwood-forest/bottomland_hardwood_forest.pdf) since settlers first arrived.

The 220 square-mile Maurepas Swamp includes bald cypress and tupelo trees.

Like other swamps in coastal Louisiana, its health is in peril. Levees built along the Mississippi after the Great Flood of 1927 have prevented towns from flooding, but they also have starved some areas of the freshwater that soaked nearby areas when the river overtopped its banks.

Over the years, saltwater has flowed into the swamp from canals and Lake Pontchartrain during severe storms and droughts (http://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/8/3/101/htm). The saltwater prevents certain trees from retaining nutrients.

River levees have also affected the swamp's health by cutting off the influx of sediments (http://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017.09.19-RESTORE-Council-awards-14.2.pdf) that offset the natural sinking of the land in this area.

The Maurepas Swamp still gets some freshwater from the Comite and Amite rivers, which drain into Lake Maurepas, Baustian said.

> "Humans have done a really good job of messing up how the water flows to the swamp."
> —Melissa Baustian, The Water Institute of the Gulf

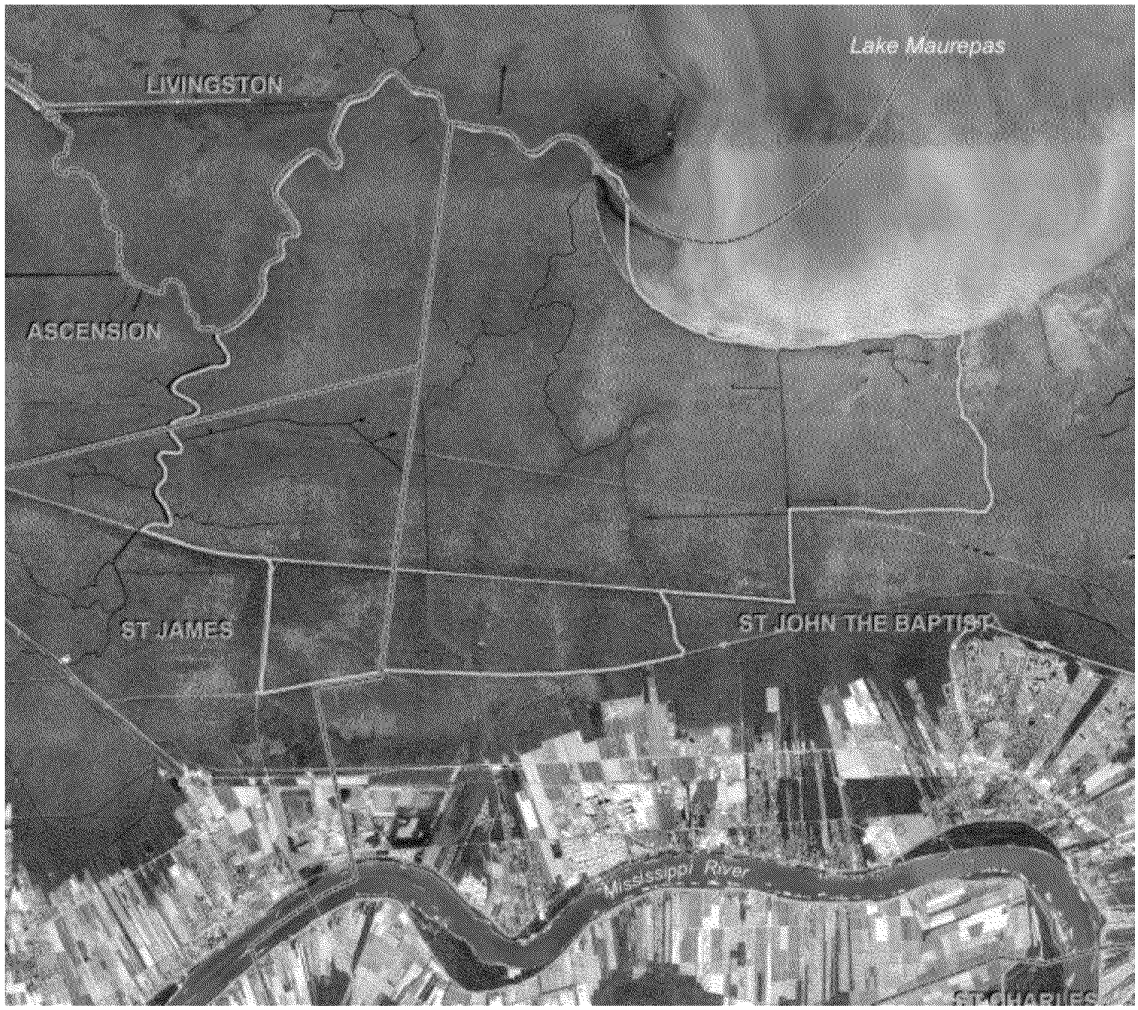
The diversion project will help scientists plan three other diversions for swamps in the Master Plan, said Bren Haase, the chief of the state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's research division.

The other projects aim to sustain the Central Wetlands near Violet in St. Bernard Parish, divert fresh water into the West Maurepas Swamp near Burnside in Ascension Parish, and increase the flow of freshwater in the Manchac Land Bridge between lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas.

"We're trying to figure out the best way to optimize this thing," Haase said about the Maurepas project.

If the diversion is built as planned, it's expected to restore or enhance about 70 square miles of forested wetlands, about a third of the swamp.

The water would flow at a maximum rate of 2,000 cubic feet per second through a gated structure in the river near Garyville, near the western edge of St. John the Baptist Parish. A channel would carry it into the swamp.



Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

The section in yellow is where the diversion will help restore wetlands in the Maurepas Swamp. Water from the Mississippi River will flow through a five-mile channel, marked by the blue line.

This diversion will carry much less water than others in the Master Plan, said Brad Miller, project manager for the Maurepas Swamp diversion. But that's by design. Smaller amounts of water may better serve the wildlife dependent on the swamp, he said.

"Think of it as watering your garden," he said. "When watering your garden, it's not always the best idea to put the sprinkler on all the time."

Miller said scientists are still trying to determine when the diversion should be open, including whether it should be seasonal.

Michael Ellis, executive director of the coastal authority, said the engineering grant represents a "significant milestone" in the restoration of Maurepas Swamp's ecosystem.

It's "urgently needed," he said, to prevent further land loss and rising salinity levels throughout the entire Pontchartrain Basin.

Ultimately, scientists hope to preserve mature bald cypress and other woody vegetation, which in turn is expected to help wading birds, migratory birds, bald eagles, alligators and other wildlife.

The diversion is designed to benefit humans, too. Researchers say it will help preserve a significant land buffer against storm surge that can build up in lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas.

The swamp helps protect communities in St. John the Baptist, Ascension, Livingston, and St. James parishes. It also protects chemical plants and oil and gas refineries along the river.

Researchers have been studying how to save the Maurepas Swamp from starvation since at least the 1990s (https://www.lacoast.gov/reports/cwcrp/1993/1993lcwrp-all.pdf).

Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

Trees are lush in a healthy area of the swamp.

One of them is is Gary Shaffer, a professor of biological sciences at Southeastern Louisiana University. In 2001, he wrote that the Maurepas Swamp had entered "a severe state of deterioration."

With more saltwater penetrating, "most of the Maurepas Swamp appears to be in transition to marsh and open water," Schaffer wrote in the Journal of Coastal Research, as shared in Science Daily (https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100306152418.htm).

He advocated then for a diversion to save what was left of the coastal forest swamp. Now, the Maurepas Swamp diversion is one of 11 (http://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Coastal-Master-Plan_Web-Book_CFinal-with-Effective-Date-06092017.pdf) outlined in the Master Plan to save Louisiana's coast.

> "Swamps take a long time to die and a long time to restore."
> —Gary Shaffer, Southeastern Louisiana University

The Restore Council has selected seven projects in Louisiana (http://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017.09.19-RESTORE-Council-awards-14.2.pdf). In August, the coastal authority announced it had received $19.5 million to expand a system to collect data (http://thelensnola.org/2017/09/13/louisiana-will-use-20-million-in-bp-fines-to-expand-a-coastal-monitoring-program/) on the effect of coastal restoration projects.

The Maurepas project is supposed to be finished in the next decade. The true timeline for it and other projects, however, is uncertain because the state doesn't have enough money to fund all the projects in the Master Plan.

Scientists still have time — at least for this project, Miller said.

"The swamp has been dying for a long time," he said. "Swamps take a long time to die and a long time to restore."

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DISPLACED BY HURRICANE MARIA, MANY PUERTO RICANS ARE MOVING TO TEXAS. SOME PLAN TO STAY AWHILE.

Jobs and education are big draws for residents of Puerto Rico.

LEAD ON, MUSICAL WORLD CHANGERS.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection/Wikimedia Commons (Public domain)

After the devastation Hurricane Maria brought to Puerto Rico, many residents are moving. Some are headed for Texas.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, a lot of Puerto Ricans are setting their sights on becoming Texans. Because Puerto Rico is a territory of the U.S., its citizens are American citizens, too – free to locate anywhere in the country they wish.

Mildred Lopez, a Puerto Rican community organizer and wife of the pastor of the Emanuel Church in Plano, says the members of her church are all Puerto Rican. Many, including Lopez' husband, have family on the island who are hoping to move to Texas – some temporarily, many for the long haul.

Her husband and his brothers are planning to bring their parents to Texas for at least a couple of months.

"I know that my island is gonna rise," she says. "I know that my island is going to be restored. I know that my island is going to rebuild. But it's gonna take time."

Written by Shelly Brisbin.

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OUTLOOK

Burying our head in sand on climate change no longer an option

By Victor B. Flatt and Rob Verchick | September 28, 2017

12

Photo: Gregory Bull, STF

FILE - In this Thursday, Aug. 31, 2017, file photo, a flame burns at the Shell Deer Park oil refinery in Deer Park, Texas. Companies have reported that roughly two dozen storage tanks holding crude oil, gasoline and other fuels collapsed or otherwise failed during Harvey, spilling a combined 140,000 gallons of fuel, according to an Associated Press analysis of state and federal accident databases. Federal rules require companies to be prepared for spills, but don't require them to take any specific measures to secure the massive fuel storage tanks at refineries and oil production sites that are prone to float and break during floods. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull, File)

Every day during the Hurricane Harvey disaster, our hearts would sink as we kept hearing the word "unprecedented" again and again. Harvey wasn't supposed to strengthen so fast; it shouldn't have stalled where it did. Every day as we hoped the worst was over, Harvey would pummel us even harder.

Everything was outside the norm, breaking all records. Over 50 inches of rain. Houston's "wettest month in recorded history." High river marks exceeded by 10 feet. A total volume of rainwater four miles square and two miles tall. Millions of residents evacuated or sheltering in place in America's fourth-largest city. All of them afraid.

Just days later came Irma, the most powerful Atlantic hurricane on record, whose strength was matched only by its unpredictability. Who should evacuate and where? Then, in less than a week, Maria followed, destroying much of Puerto Rico's infrastructure.

The shock of these powerful and unprecedented events in such quick succession rattles even the strongest. How do we ready ourselves for "unprecedented"?

While these disasters are unprecedented in many ways, they are not beyond imagination and not immune to safer and smarter policies. And now that the storms have moved on and people are out of immediate danger, we need to have a national conversation about that.

We've both spent years studying and advocating for policies that keep people safer during disasters. One of us watched his New Orleans house stew for weeks in swamp water after Hurricane Katrina breached the city's faulty levees. And one of us watched the waters rise around him in Houston during Harvey as intense rain began to flood even a high-elevation, well-drained area.

Unprecedented weather is on a roll, enough so that we need to reconsider the assumptions that underlie our pre-storm planning. Houston has now had 500-year storms - storms with a 0.2 percent chance of occurring in a given year - in each of the last three years. In addition, a draft section of the upcoming U.S. National Climate Assessment - leaked to the press but not yet released by the Trump administration - documents a 40 percent increase in "heavy precipitation" events in Texas since 1901 and projects an increase in hurricane intensity and the number of "very intense" hurricanes as average temperatures climb. Whatever one thinks of the causes of

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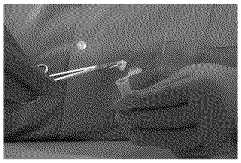
LETTERS



Monday letters: Rape kits, Puerto Rico, tax reform

Carson: Houstonians can count on HUD

climate change, it's clear the historical record is no longer an accurate way of projecting future conditions. We've got a new "normal" on our hands.

Parker: Alabama's Senate Republican primary runoff was stranger

Go Astros! Home team has given fans plenty to cheer about

Sunday letters: Respectful protest, insecticide concerns, down on

How should we prepare?

To begin, we should stop making things worse. In addition to the Trump Administration's well-publicized efforts to roll back limits on carbon pollution, it has also axed important initiatives, including the Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, that helped cities, states and tribes prepare for larger floods, prolonged droughts, and stronger wildfires. The president also revoked Obama-era standards that required the federal government to account for sea-level rise and other climate change impacts when building new infrastructure.

Most recently, the Trump administration stalled the release of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Resilience Toolkit because of the mere mention of climate change. This toolkit, which teaches communities how to rebuild in safe and cost-effective ways, is sorely needed as we undertake recovery from these disasters.

Similar foolishness is at work at the state level, too. In North Carolina, unprecedented river flooding killed 22 people last year. That was after the state government simply stopped enforcing a law that required agencies like the North Carolina Emergency Management Service to update its climate models. Perhaps with up-to-date information, more evacuations would have been ordered and lives saved.

We should be proud that the emergency responses in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico were so much improved over the disastrous Katrina response. And we urge Congress to support recovery efforts in those places with generosity and speed. But government also has a role to play on the front end. That means managing development and funding infrastructure with the conditions of the future in mind.

This cannot be done without the federal government doing an about-face on climate change. President Trump must reinstate the programs and policies that help communities learn about climate change impacts and prepare for them. And his party must drop the pretense that the reality of climate change is somehow in doubt. With the right leadership and scientific information, America can surely protect itself from unprecedented storms. It's the unprecedented ignorance we worry about.

Flatt is the Dwight Olds Chair in Law and the faculty director of the Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Center at the University of Houston Law School. Verchick is a law professor at Loyola University in New Orleans and author of "Facing Catastrophe: Environmental Action for a Post-Katrina World."

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Formosa releases most chemicals in region after hurricane

By Jessica Priest
Sept. 29, 2017 at 8:51 p.m.
Updated Sept. 30, 2017 at 1:25 p.m.

Formosa releases chemicals into the air in Calhoun County on Sept. 4. CONTRIBUTED.

Imagine 13 elephants floating over Calhoun County.

Formosa recently released more than 160,000 pounds - or the equivalent of 13 elephants - of chemicals, some of which are carcinogens, into the air.

These emissions are rarely discussed among residents, whose livelihoods depend on the company.

The plastic producer's emissions are, if you will, the elephant in the room in a county where Formosa is working on a $5 billion expansion that will bring with it hundreds of jobs.

The company is already one of Calhoun County's biggest employers. As of Aug. 31, it provided more than 3,000 jobs, a mix of Formosa employees and outside contractors. In 2016, Formosa's payroll, which did not include contractors, was $197 million.

TO COMMENT

To comment about Formosa amending its air quality permit number 91780, go to tceq.texas.gov/about/comments.html or write to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105 P.O. Box 13057, Austin, TX 78711-3087.

TO COMPLAIN

To make an environmental complaint, go to tceq.texas.gov/compliance/complaints or call 1-888-777-3186. You can complain anonymously.

The plant is in Point Comfort. The only thing that separates it from its estimated 721 residents is a farm-to-market road.

The latest numbers show that Formosa was among dozens of petrochemical plants along the Texas coast that released 4 million pounds of hazardous chemicals in to the air after Hurricane Harvey disrupted their production. That's down from the 5.5 million pounds the plants initially reported would be released, and the plants are still turning in their final reports to the state.

Formosa's final report was also lower than its initial report.

Company spokesman Bill Harvey said it considers only six of the chemicals it released to be hazardous: benzene, butadiene, hexane, styrene, toluene and xylene. It released a total of 6,388.82 pounds of those.

Residents should be especially concerned about the release of benzene and butadiene because they are carcinogens, said Shaye Wolf, who is studying the releases statewide for the Center for Biological Diversity.

Benzene is colorless or light yellow at room temperature. It has a sweet odor and is highly flammable.

It evaporates quickly, but its vapor is heavy and may sink into low-lying areas or float on water.

While the seriousness of benzene poisoning depends on the amount, route and length of time of exposure as well as the age and pre-existing conditions of the exposed person, benzene can harm bone marrow and cause a decrease in red blood cells, leading to anemia, excessive bleeding and weakened immune system. Long-term exposure to benzene has also been linked to irregular periods in women and a decrease in the size of their ovaries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Butadiene, meanwhile, is also colorless, but instead has a mild gasoline-like odor. Short-term exposure to it inflames the nose and causes changes to the lungs, heart as well as the reproductive and neurological systems.

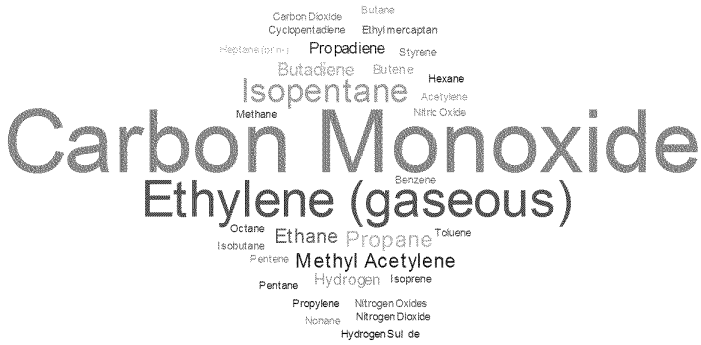
And like benzene, studies have shown that people exposed to it for a long time have an increased risk for cancer, according to the CDC.

While only about 4 percent of what Formosa emitted between Aug. 24 and Sept. 8 was benzene and butadiene, no amount is safe, said Neil Carman, the clean air director for the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club.

"This is what toxicologists tell me," Carman said. "The only safe level to a known carcinogen is zero. Any amount of that, you are putting a person's health at risk over a long period of time."

What chemicals were released

by Formosa between Aug. 24-Sept. 8 in pounds



SOURCE: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

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What chemicals were released

Infogram

Formosa emissions after Hurricane Harvey from Jessica Priest on Vimeo.

The chemical Formosa released the most from Aug. 24 to Sept. 8 was carbon monoxide.

Breathing in air with a high concentration of carbon monoxide reduces the amount of oxygen that can get to critical organs, such the brain or heart. That's why people with heart disease are especially vulnerable to short-term exposure to a high concentration of carbon monoxide in the air. If they're exercising or stressed, they can experience chest pain known as angina, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Elsewhere in the Crossroads, Dow in Seadrift and Invista in Victoria reported releases caused by the hurricane. Dow reported that on the afternoon of Aug. 30, a small section of piping that led to a transmitter leaked 12.58 pounds of ethylene oxide, which the Occupational Safety and Health Administration describes as hazardous because of its flammability and its radioactivity.

Those exposed to it for a short time get headaches, vomit and lose their breath. Chronic exposure can cause cancer, too, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Dow reported that the leak was caused by a power outage. The ethylene oxide expanded in the pipe, and Dow couldn't operate a valve to relieve the pressure with the power out.

Invista also reported releasing ammonia and nitric oxide. Invista reported its boilers burned natural gas during its shutdown and startup, but it does not appear to have exceeded the visibility limit set forth in its air permit with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

While Formosa has described its recent release as unavoidable in past interviews, Wolf and Carman say they can avoid it by installing equipment that catch the chemicals to reuse in other areas of the plant. Formosa has replied it already has systems in place to do that.

Carman has also said Formosa's releases may be caused by shutting down and starting up the plant too quickly.

According to reports Formosa filed with the TCEQ, it flared chemicals for 39 hours to shut down the plant and 52 hours to start it up again.

This release also comes as Formosa is trying to amend its air permit with the TCEQ to install a third elevated flare that is smaller than its predecessors.

Harvey said it wants a new flare not to increase the amount of chemicals it releases, but to allow it the flexibility to perform maintenance on the plant and because it would be more efficient.

Raymond Butler, who grew up in Point Comfort and goes fishing on Lavaca Bay, thought Formosa's current flares could not be designed properly because of how much they smoked before and after the hurricane.

Butler has experience in designing and operating flares. He used to manage a production unit similar to Formosa's, but at Union Carbide in Seadrift. Union Carbide is now known as Dow.

Butler read about Formosa trying to change its air permit in the newspaper and asked the TCEQ whether it would have a public hearing about the matter beforehand.

TCEQ has not decided whether to have a public hearing, and as it is still in the hurricane response and recovery phase, it does not know when it will start investigating whether Formosa's recent emissions complied with its permit or the law, said Andrea Morrow, a TCEQ spokeswoman.

While Formosa supports the community, Butler said, "I'm concerned that things are going on without proper supervision or control."

Myron Spree, of Port Lavaca, also asked TCEQ for a public meeting.

He said after Formosa learned this, he was invited to meet with the plant manager. Spree said he wasn't trying to get Formosa in trouble but to encourage the company to be more environmentally-friendly.

"It wasn't really a stressful situation for me to go in there and visit with the plant manager. It didn't bother me, but I could understand why it would bother other people," Spree said.

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Comments

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Roger Coates

The article and especially the headline are especially egregious given the fact that Formosa is the "elephant" in the room. Consider comparing all the plants start-up and shut-down emissions to the annual production and payroll size. Formosa being the Elephant would by nature incur more emissions than the smaller plants.

Like · Reply · 3 · Sep 30, 2017 4:48am

Bob Lindsey · Bad Homburg

Roger...your comment is a perfect example as to why "bigger" is not always better...if two nuclear bombs were dropped, I can hardly see how a headline would be "egregious" for pointing out that the larger bomb caused the most fallout...

Like · Reply · 23 hrs

Roger Coates

Bob Lindsey The problem with the article is that it made no reference or comparison to size. It just stated that Formosa released the most contaminants,giving the impression is was more evil. An elephant will make a larger pile of poop than a rabbit. That doesn't mean we shoot the elephant.

Like · Reply · 1 · 23 hrs

Bob Lindsey · Bad Homburg

Roger Coates...either way, it's still the "elephant"...and that ain't "poop" we are talking about here...

Like · Reply · 12 hrs

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HURRICANE HARVEY

Health Official Says Anti-Mosquito Aerial Spraying Was Successful In Harris County

The insecticide that was used is registered with the EPA, but it is banned in Europe.

AL ORTIZ | SEPTEMBER [illegible], [illegible] PM

[illegible]

Al Ortiz

Dr. Mustapha Debboun (first from right), who is in charge of the Mosquito Control division at Harris County's Department of Public Health, says the spraying was at least 8 percent effective in Harris County.

This week, Texas completed its aerial spraying for mosquitoes, which was focused on curbing a potential surge of the mosquito populati Harvey, and health officials say the operation has been successful in Harris County.

State and county health officials say the large areas Harvey's rainfall and flooding created for mosquitoes to lay eggs made the spraying necessary, especially considering these insects can carry diseases such as the West Nile and Zika viruses, as well as Dengue and Chik

Dr. Mustapha Debboun, who is in charge of the Mosquito Control division at Harris County's Department of Public Health, notes the spra at least 80 percent effective.

That assessment is based on what experts call landing counts, meaning how many mosquitoes land on a person before and after the ins is sprayed.

Debboun gives the example of what they found at Telge Park, in the Cypress area.

"Before, my technicians were getting 120 mosquitoes per minute, the next day, after the spray, they were getting one mosquito per minute Debboun told Houston Public Media.

Mosquitoes can reproduce in very small amounts of water, for instance what fits in a bottle cap, and therefore health officials say the spra the most effective way to deal with the widespread standing water after Harvey.

The insecticide used for the spraying is called Naled and it has been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) since 1

Because of the small amounts used for aerial spraying, which is about one to two tablespoons per acre, the EPA says it is not considere dangerous for people, but the product is banned in Europe.

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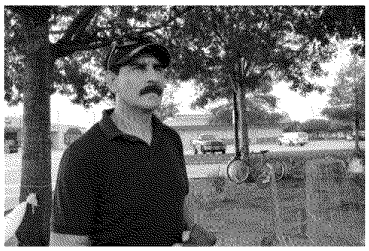

Harvey Means More Jobs. But Does It Mean More Exploitation Too?

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More wells needed in Kirtland fuel plume cleanup

By Maddy Hayden / Journal Staff Writer

Published: Friday, September 29th, 2017 at 4:02pm
Updated: Friday, September 29th, 2017 at 10:05pm

A representative of the U.S. Geological Survey speaks with attendees of a Thursday night public meeting on the Kirtland fuel leak at the African American Performing Arts Center in Albuquerque. (Maddy Hayden/Albuquerque Journal)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Albuquerque neighborhoods atop an underground fuel plume caused by a massive leak on Kirtland Air Force Base can expect to host more monitoring wells in the new year, officials said during a public meeting on the leak Thursday evening.

Swiftly rising water table levels underground have taken 53 of about 150 of the existing wells out of commission, according to the New Mexico Environment Department.

“There is a crucial need to install groundwater monitoring wells and sentinel wells to be able to provide continued confidence in the EDB (ethylene dibromide) extent,” said Diane Agnew, a hydrologist with the New Mexico Environment Department.

More than 150 wells have been dug on and around the plume to measure levels of the toxic chemical EDB, which floats atop the groundwater.

The water table was previously rising at two to three feet per year, Agnew said.

It has now risen five feet in the last six months, she said.

If the devices in the wells that test EDB levels are too far underwater, they're no longer effective.

Kate Lynnes, senior advisor on the clean-up for the U.S. Air Force, said there are still enough working wells to monitor the plume for now.

"There's still an adequate network," Lynnes told the Journal on Friday. "If the water continues to go up at this rate, we're going to need some new ones."

Lynnes said the work plan for new wells has not been completed, but she estimated that they'll need to put in around 10 more sentinel wells, which sit outside the plume area and are used to determine whether the plume is spreading.

She was unsure of how many monitoring wells would be needed. Those sit atop the plume and measure EDB levels.

Lynnes said drilling of those wells may start at the beginning of 2018.

The majority of Thursday's meeting was spent discussing two recently submitted reports, which largely detail information that was already suspected or known about the leak and resulting plume.

Lynnes detailed the findings of the Risk Assessment report, which analyzed potential adverse health effects of the leak. It found no current or future health concerns on- or off-base for workers and residents of the area.

The report examined possible pathways to humans through groundwater, soil and soil vapor. While groundwater is contaminated above legal drinking water limits, there is no way for it to get to humans at this point, Lynnes said.

"We're here to commit to cleaning this plume up. That's why we're here, that's what we're going to do," Lynnes said. "But we wanted to show that you're safe while we're doing that."

The other report, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Facility Investigation, is a 4,000-page document containing detailed data taken from the leak.

The reports will be used in eventually identifying final corrective actions for the leak.

Contact the writer.

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AUDIO

To Help Save Monarchs, Oklahoma Conservationists Work to Repair a Plant's Weedy Reputation

SEPTEMBER 28, 2017 | 3:47 PM

BY ZOE TRAVERS

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A tagged Monarch butterfly on a flowering lantana plant at the Oklahoma City.

Stephanie Henson admires her colorful backyard garden in Edmond. Approaching a pink-and-white plant, she squeals and laughs and she spots some butterflies.

"Oh look, they're itty-bitty," she says. "Look at 'em!"

Henson doesn't know much about gardening, but she's doing what she can to attract butterflies, which is what conservation specialists and government officials are trying to encourage here in Oklahoma and across the country.

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The striking orange-and-black Monarch is a staple of fall in Oklahoma, but recent studies suggest the butterfly's population in North America has decreased by more than 90 percent and could be extinct in 20 years. Researchers say the drop is worsened by declining numbers of milkweed plants, which are essential to Monarch survival.

THE NEED FOR WEED

There's a reason milkweed is such an integral part of Monarch conservation: It's the only plant the butterfly will lay its eggs on, and the only plant its caterpillars will eat.

A lot of gardeners, however, hate milkweed. The plant has a reputation as an invasive and ugly nuisance that many residents and governments, historically, have worked to remove. Residents, researchers and governments in Oklahoma are part of a national conservation effort that centers on changing attitudes and increasing numbers of the often-unpopular plant.

Local governments and Native American tribes are working together to increase Monarch populations. Hundreds of cities across the country have signed onto a "Monarch Pledge" organized by the National Wildlife Federation, including eight here in Oklahoma.

Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation and Jerry Tomlinson, mayor of Durant, signed the agreement in June.

"It's about making a difference to the pollinators so that we can continue to have plants and trees and flowers that produce the food that we all need to be able to eat," says Tracy Horst, director environmental stability for the Choctaw Nation.

Horst says the Choctaw wants to expand the program to other nearby cities.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides Monarch education programs to local schools, and has reimbursed landowners for planting milkweed. While these efforts have seen successes, Oklahoma officials are creating a statewide conservation plan, which should be complete by the end of the year.

Zoos and gardens around the state hand out milkweed plants to encourage visitors to help by creating their own Monarch habitats. Nationally, groups are encouraging local governments to remove milkweed from lists of "noxious" plants.

"The good news for Monarchs is that they are a species of high interest right now," says Rebecca Snyder, a conservation specialist at the Oklahoma City Zoo.

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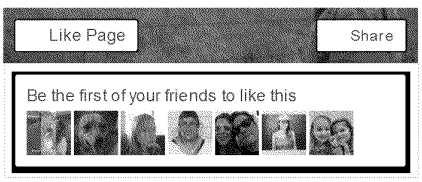

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ZOE TRAVERS / STATEIMPACT OKLAHOMA

Stephanie Henson points out plants in her backyard garden in Edmond, Okla.

The Oklahoma City Zoo has a designated butterfly garden and works with a program called Monarch Watch to tag butterfly wings to track how how weather and climate affect migration patterns.

"It provides really important information," Snyder says. " It's part of how we know that Monarch populations are in steep decline.

Katie Boyer, an outreach specialist from the Texas and Oklahoma division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," says the information from the tagging program is added to a national database.

"That will give us quantifiable information about how much habitat exists and how much we think will exist in the future," she says.

'LOVE A BUTTERFLY'

In the backyard garden in Edmond, Stephanie Henson says she understands why some Oklahomans might not like milkweed, "but I've never really met a person who doesn't love a butterfly."

Conservationists say Oklahomans can protect Monarchs by limiting use of pesticides and supporting local gardens. The best way to boost the numbers of butterflies, researchers say, is for residents and governments to learn to love milkweed and let it grow.

"It really is an all-hands-on-deck situation now," says conservation specialist Rebecca Snyder. "We need everybody now, even if it's just a small area in your backyard."

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Ben Vincent • 3 days ago

Thank you for this article. Too many people point fingers only at agriculture for the decline in Monarchs. They fail to acknowledge the impact cities have had.
Last year I had asked a professor that studies Monarchs if privacy fences and smaller lot sizes with homes closer together impeded migrating Monarchs. He assured me they did not.
I then commented on how all the farms, ranches and wild fields that used to be around are now covered with houses and streets and perfectly manicured lawns with no native plants in sight. And how very few houses have gardens anymore. He agreed with that.
He called cities, "green deserts".
Large cities cover areas that can be too vast for Monarchs to travel across when there are no food or water sources for them.

I put in one flower garden this year and plan on adding more.

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US Extends Contract For Cleanup Work At Nuclear Lab

By KRWG NEWS AND PARTNERS • SEP 29, 2017

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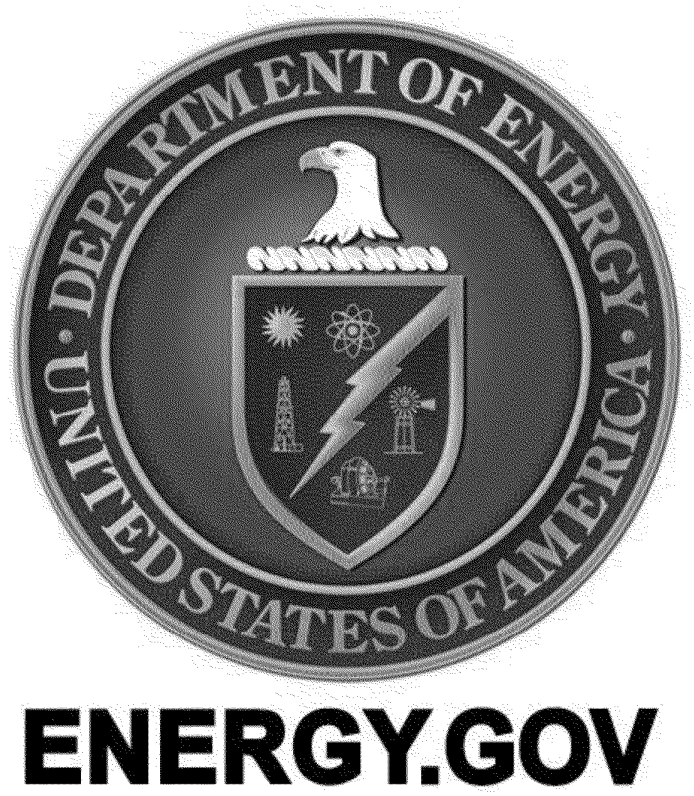

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LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) — The U.S. Energy Department has extended a contract worth $65 million for environmental cleanup work at one of the nation's premier nuclear research laboratories.

With the extension announced this week, the private consortium that runs Los Alamos National Laboratory will be paid for an additional six months of work. The contract was set to expire Saturday.

The temporary cleanup contract was ×rst extended in 2016. Of×cials say the latest extension will give the Energy Department more time to ×nish procurement of a long-term contract worth an estimated $1.7 billion over 10 years.

The contract was initially awarded as part of a shake-up that came after the lab improperly packed a drum of waste that was shipped to the federal government's underground repository in southern New Mexico. The resulting chemical reaction in 2014 caused a radiation release.

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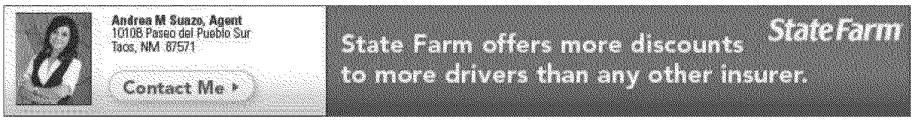
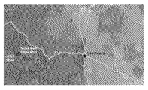


Uranium mines in Carson National Forest cleaned up after more than 60 years

(/uploads/original/1506623495_0dc2.jpg)

A contractor works to clean up two abandoned uranium mines in the Carson National Forest – west of Tres Piedras.
PHOTO COURTESY U.S. FOREST SERVICE



Posted Friday, September 29, 2017 4:00 am

By Cody Hooks
chooks@taosnews.com

Two abandoned uranium mines in the Carson National Forest that for decades posed threats to human and ecological health have been cleaned up.

The Tusas East Slope and J.O.L. mine sites are located less than a mile from each other, about 10 miles west of Tres Piedras in the national forest off of Forest Road 712.

Gamma radiation and radium-226 levels in the waste rock piles at the two mines were "signiácantly greater" than background concentrations and possibly presented "a signiácant risk to frequent site visitors and ecological rectors," according to an environmental review prepared by Weston Solutions in 2016.

The exposed mining areas were open to the public - including people who ride all-terrain vehicles, hikers, hunters and wood collectors - for decades.

Both mines were active for only one year during the Cold War-fueled uranium boom.

The Tusas East Slope Mine, then owned by the Colonial Uranium Company, produced 8 tons of uranium ore during 1954 and left behind 752 cubic yards of unconáned and uncontrolled waste material in three piles and two pits, according to Forest Service documents.

The J.O.L. site was mined in 1956 by the Arriba Uranium Company. The mine saw 8 tons of uranium ore produced, but it also left behind 445 cubic yards of waste material in áve piles, as well as a collapsed tunnel.

The New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program, housed under the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, identiáes and helps clean up pre-1977 mines throughout the state.

According to the department's website (http://nm-emnrd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=1b5f929bad424bf7870e2148e3ff64de), more than 340 million pounds of uranium was mined from New Mexico's private, state, federal and tribal land between 1940 and 2002. The department ánished a four-year inventory of legacy (abandoned) uranium mines in 2010, paving the way for collaborations with other government agencies to "survey, prioritize and clean up" the mines.

Both Carson mines - as well as two former uranium mines in the Santa Fe National Forest - were among those identiáed by the inventory.

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The original companies that owned the mines are no longer around, so the responsibility for the cleanup fell to the U.S. Forest Service. The agency decided in July to remediate both Carson sites and the High Peak Mine in Santa Fe, contracting with Engineering Remediation Resources Group for $294,911.74.

According to Maria McGaha, a regional environmental engineer with the Forest Service, the cleanup is among its smallest and least costly remediation projects.

The waste material from the Tusas East Slope and J.O.L. mines was dumped into a single excavated area and covered with dirt, reseeded and fenced.

McGaha said the risk of radioactive materials leaching into the ground and waterways was low enough to not warrant a bottom seal in the repository, but that the site would be monitored annually for áve years.

The Forest Service inspected the work sites Sept. 18. Cleanup at all three sites was ofácially completed Sept. 22.

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Keywords

uranium mines (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter=uranium mines), abandoned (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= abandoned), Carson National Forest (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= Carson National Forest), clean up (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= clean up), Tusas East Slope (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= Tusas East Slope), J.O.L. (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= J.O.L.), mine sites (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= mine sites), Tres Piedras (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_álter= Tres Piedras)

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THE TAOS NEWS Leaky Cabresto Dam to get new liner

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The leaky Cabresto Dam in the Carson National Forest 7 miles northeast of Questa is set to get an upgrade beginning this week. A project to install a new liner is being directed by the Dam Safety Bureau of …
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Tempo Weekly Events

SAT 7 Taos Optimist Club Bene t Magic S..
Taos High School | Taos, NM

MON 2 Taos has Talent
The Alley Cantina | Taos, NM

MON 2 Taos Two Steppin' with Dylan Earl
Taos Mesa Brewing | Taos, NM

MON 2 BREWGRASS Night with The Nosee..
Taos Taproom | Taos, NM

MON 2 Kate and Billy's Medicine Show
Adobe Bar at the T... | Taos, NM

MON 2 TCA Exhibits at The Taos Inn: Mark…
The Historic Taos ... | Taos, NM

MON 2 Tai Chi Everyday 9 am
Kit Carson Park | Taos, NM

MON 2 TCA Exhibits: Paper, Paper Paper
The Encore Gallery... | Taos, NM

MON 2 Archery Tag
Taos Mesa Brewing | Taos, NM

MON 2 TUE 3 WED 4 THU 5 FRI 6 SAT 7

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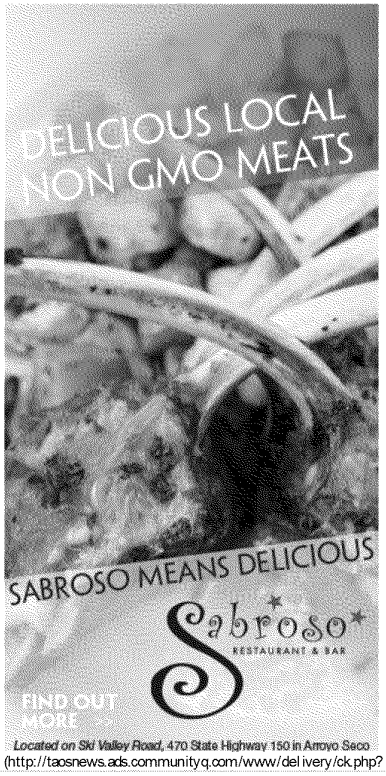

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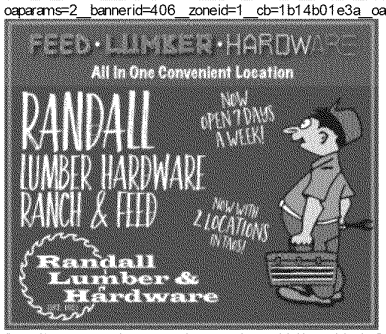

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http://www.ocolly.com/news/despite-poor-taste-stillwater-water-is-safe-to-drink-according/article_892aae10-a6f3-11e7-8c84-e3b19a953133.html

Despite poor taste, Stillwater water is safe to drink according to DEQ

Sam Holzschuh, Sta Reporter, @Holtzue Oct 1, 2017 Updated 11 hrs ago

Ethan Sample/O'Colly

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Despite what some consider poor taste, the Stillwater plant that provides water to the city has had no functioning issues since the ammonia injectors failed last spring, city sta said.

The safety of the water is of no concern to Carley Eastop, a junior chemical engineering student at Oklahoma State University. Eastop lives o campus, but does not drink city water without a lter.

“It just tastes so bad,” Eastop said. “It can’t possibly be safe.”

However, as municipal water goes, the quality of safety and quality of taste are not equivalent. She might not drink the water, but Eastop said bathing and washing clothes does not concern her as much.

“I can’t stand to drink the tap water, so I use a lter on my sink,” Eastop said.

Despite the safety of the water, citizens like Eastop refuse to drink it out of the tap. Municipality water in Oklahoma is held to safety standards but not tasty standards.

Multiple factors including quality of source water and consumer’s taste buds can a ect the taste of the city water. City Manager Norman McNickle said this can explain why some don’t like the water and others don’t mind it.

“I know there are cities I visit where I think the water tastes awful, but there is no question the water (in Stillwater) is safe to drink,” McNickle said. “It is no di erent than people who chose Pepsi or Coke. Some prefer the taste of one over the other.”

There were no safety violations during water quality testing throughout 2016, according to a “fresh” report from the Department of Environmental Quality. The DEQ is an Oklahoma governmental agency that monitors general environmental health and safety conditions, such as water safety.

McNickle said the report was “so fresh it has not yet been distributed.”

Reports are not distributed to municipalities during the monitored year unless a violation is found. The 2016 DEQ report was recently released to the City of Stillwater and shows the city’s water is safe.

The city’s water cleaning process uses ozone treatments, a normal technique, and chloramines, a chemical combination of chlorine and ammonia. In early Spring 2017, citizens noticed abnormal hints of chlorine in their drinking water. The mechanism that contributes ammonia into the water malfunctioned and put chemicals into the system at unsafe levels.

At the time, McNickle said the problem was noticed within hours and the chloramine system was shut o . In place of chloramines, the water department sta used chlorine to clean the water.

Although the chlorine levels were within regulation of the DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency, the method causes water to smell like chlorine. Some citizens found the water's avor o ensive and used bottled water instead.

Chlorine is the standard for cleaning municipal water in Oklahoma, but some cities have upgraded to chloramine because of its e ectiveness and less abrasive smell, McNickle said in March. Both DEQ and EPA require residual levels of chlorine in water tests. This means, regardless of the cleaning method, a speci ed range of chlorine must be found in tested water to guarantee safe quality.

The broken equipment was replaced in about a month. The city's water has returned to normal levels of chloramines, all within legal limits.

McNickle said water department sta once skipped testing for alkalinity since the repairs, but all other completed alkalinity tests since have shown normal levels. McNickle said the skipped one was not a violation, but it had to be reported to the DEQ.

Stillwater and Oklahoma State University do not source the same water supply. Oklahoma State University collects water from Lake Carl Blackwell and treats it separately from the city. Stillwater's water comes from Kaw Lake and is treated in the plant north of town.

news@ocolly.com

To: Hurricane Harvey Principals[Hurricane_Harvey_Principals@epa.gov]
Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: Restivo, Angela
Sent: Tue 8/29/2017 11:43:47 PM
Subject: reissued Hurricane Harvey 1700 Update 8/29/2017
8-29-17 1700Update Final.pdf

Tropical Storm Harvey 2017
8/29/2017 – 1700 CDT Update

Highlights

Texas

EPA is currently monitoring a situation at the Arkema Facility in Crosby, Texas. EPA was notified by our representative at the State Operations Center. The facility is without power and has lost their backup power source for one of the containers. The contents of that container is approaching auto-ignition temperatures and could potentially detonate within the next 24 hours. The area is evacuated due to flooding, local first responders are in the area conducting search and rescue. These personnel are currently being evacuated from the area. EPA is working with the Department of Homeland Security to develop plume modeling to provide to local responders.

Four EPA Region 6 Incident Management Team members are mobilizing to Corpus Christi, Texas today to establish unified command. The team will rendezvous with TCEQ and the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) counterparts as well as US Coast Guard personnel to form a unified command.

Members from the National Incident Management Assistance Team (NIMAT)arrived in Dallas August 29,2017 and is integrated into the Incident Management Team structure.

Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) vehicle is enroute from North Carolina to assist with air monitoring in the impacted areas throughout Texas and is scheduled to arrive by Friday, September 1, 2017.

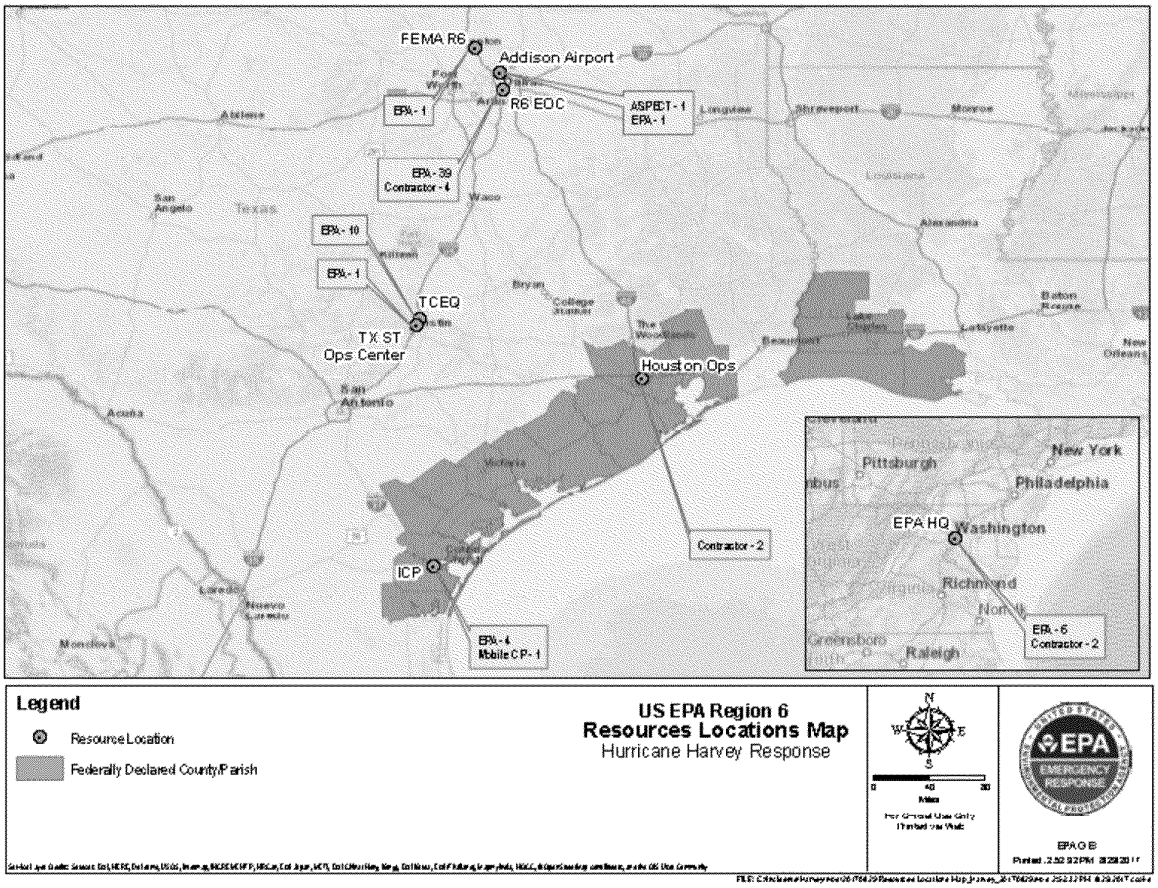
Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is monitoring for possible flooding. They are ready to respond if needed. As of August 29, 2017 no additional parishes have been declared.

Resources

As of Tuesday, August 29, 2017 at 1700.

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	Texas SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	HQ EOC Wash DC	Totals
EPA	39	1	1	10		4	6	61
START	3				2	2		7
IT Contractor	1						2	3
TOTAL	43	1	1	10	2	4	8	69



Industrial Sources

On August 29, 2017, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality reported that Valero's Corpus Christi refinery will begin start up operations over the next four to six days. During this start-up procedure they will be running at 60% capacity.

Spill/Release Response

Hotline Calls as of 1500 on August 29, 2017	
Number of Harvey Related Calls Received During Reporting Period	8
Total Number of Harvey Related Calls to Date	36

EPA Emergency Response Assets

EPA's aerial assessment aircraft, is activated and will conduct aerial reconnaissance over the Corpus Christi area starting today, August 29, 2017, as weather permits

Surface and Flood Water Quality Monitoring

EPA has drafted incident specific surface and flood water sampling plan to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminates found in storm water. The plan has been provided to Headquarter for review.

Drinking Water / Wastewater Assessments

Preparing to mobilize teams to assist with drinking water and waste water field assessments as soon as field conditions allow.

EPA is supporting TCEQ in contacting drinking water and waste water systems. Current status as of 1700 on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. EPA deployed 10 personnel to assist TCEQ's Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin, Texas.

Drinking Water - Total # of Systems: 4422

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending	43
Out of Contact	27
On generator – lost pressure	3
No problems	172
On generator – never lost pressure	9
No Status	4141
Lost pressure & or Treatment	4
Site visit needed	2
Lifted Boil Water Notice due to negative. BacT samples. Normal ops resumed	3
Not Operating	18

Waste Water - Total # of Systems: 2453

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending - Phone evaluation only	18
Out of Contact - phone evaluation only	9
No Problems	179
No Status	2226
WWTP and/or Collection on Generator or bypass pumps for Lift Station	15
WWTP and/or Collection nonoperational no Sanitary Sewer Overflow	2
WWTP and/or Collection Partially Operational Sanitary Sewer Overflow	4

EPA Laboratory/ Analytical Services

The Houston laboratory is reporting that they will be closed until Tuesday September 5, 2017. The laboratory and office building is not damaged. EPA has back up capabilities for laboratory services should the Houston facility remain closed.

EPA's organic chemical mobile laboratory is enroute from Denver, Colorado to the Corpus Christi area. The anticipated arrival in Corpus Christi is Friday September 1, 2017. The mobile laboratory can be utilized to process environmental samples.

Data Management

Region 6 activated the National Data team to provide support data management activities in Corpus Christ. Two Data Team members have been deployed and are expected to arrive in Corpus Christi by Friday September 1, 2017.

Communications

EPA is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA communication structure and management, and participates in the daily National Incident Communication Conference Line (NICCL) call. EPA has initiated its Crisis Communication Plan to ensure rapid response to providing coordinated, accurate, up-to-date information regarding its field activities. EPA Public Information Office will be established in Dallas with forward field components as needed to support the HQ Office of Public Affairs.

Refineries/Fuel Waivers

1. TEXAS: EPA has approved the State of Texas' request to extend the Texas fuel waiver to allow use of non-road diesel fuel in on-road applications. This non-road fuel has different tax treatment, and to differentiate it, is colored with red dye. We need to waive the limitations in our regulations and then IRS needs to issue a waiver as well.

2. LOUISIANA: A waiver that would allow use of 9.0lb. RVP was approved on 28 August.

3. GEORGIA: The fuels team is continuing to investigate the fuel supply issue. It is likely that we will need to issue a waiver soon.

4. Oklahoma submitted a statewide low Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fuel waiver request on 28 August.

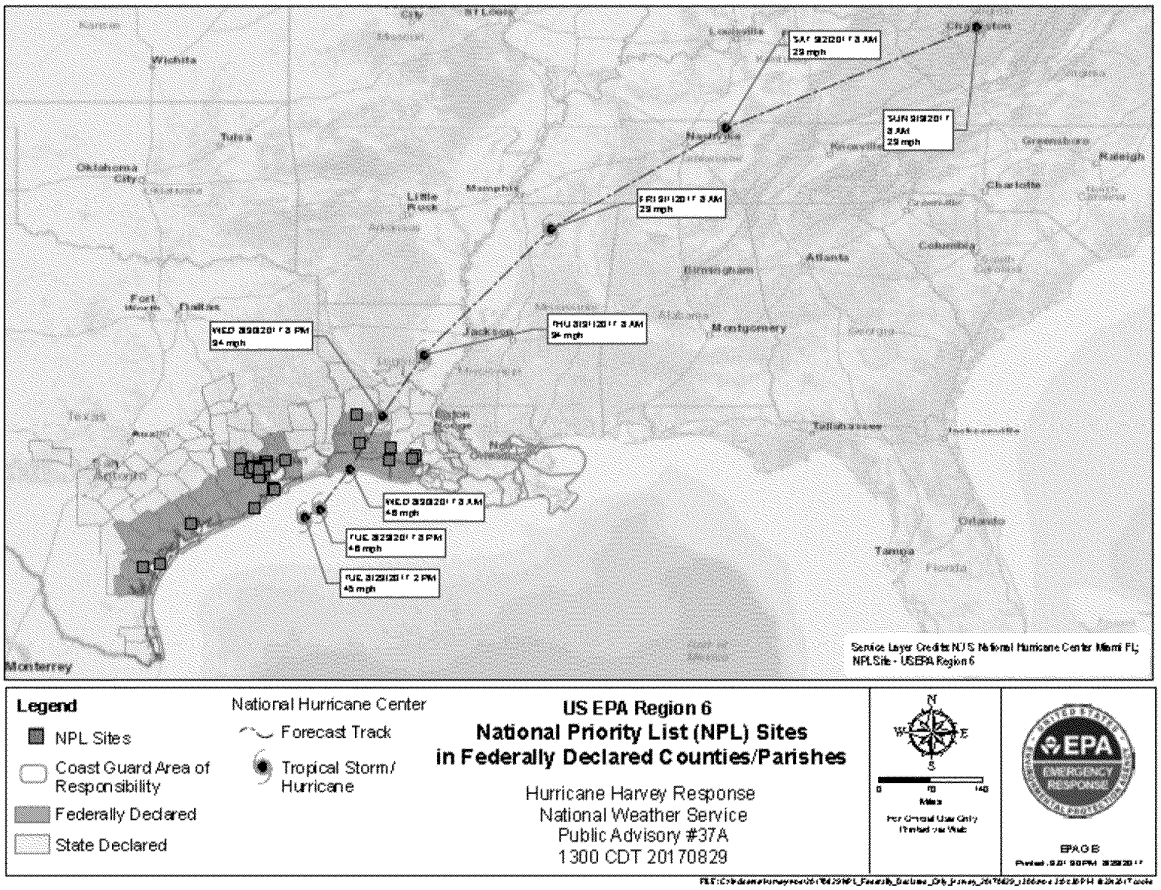
5. The Renewable Fuels Association submitted a request to relax the RVP to 10 psi.

Funding

EPA has received a Mission Assignment (MA) to assist the State of Texas with drinking water, wastewater and Hazmat recovery operations. This Mission Assignment for $8.5 million added 170 EPA and USCG personnel to the TCEQ Hurricane Harvey response in Corpus Christi, Houston and surrounding impacted areas. This MA is for support of assessment and response operations to actual or threatened spill or release of hazardous materials and oil. Assistance includes response to release/discharges from fixed facilities, as well as orphaned containers and mobile sources.

Superfund NPL Sites

Region 6 Remedial Project Managers continue to monitor and assess the status of NPL sites in the impacted areas. Some sites continue to be inundated with flood water. Assessments of those site will be conducted as flood waters recede. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site is experiencing severe flooding. The highest point of the temporary cap is under 5-feet of flood water. Floodwaters are not expected to recede for several days.



Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties **8/29/2017**

SITE NAME	STATE	COUNTY	STATUS SUMMARY
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	TX	CALHOUN	No Reported Impact
BRINE SERVICE CO.	TX	NUECES	Impacted
BRIO REFINING INC.	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
FALCON REFINERY	TX	SAN PATRICIO	Impacted
FRENCH, LTD.	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	TX	BRAZORIA	Status not Confirmed
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	TX	HARRIS	Status not Confirmed
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	TX	GALVESTON	Impacted
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
MOTCO, INC.	TX	GALVESTON	Status not Confirmed
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
PATRICK BAYOU	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	TX	LIBERTY	Impacted
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
TEX-TIN CORP.	TX	GALVESTON	Impacted
US OIL RECOVERY	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	LA	BEAUREGARD	No Reported Impact
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	LA	CALCASIEU	No Reported Impact
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	LA	CAMERON	No Reported Impact
SBA SHIPYARD	LA	JEFFERSON DAVIS	No Reported Impact
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	LA	VERMILION	No Reported Impact
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	LA	VERMILION	No Reported Impact
D.L. MUD, INC.	LA	VERMILION	No Reported Impact

Legend of NPL Site Status Summary Indicators	
Impacted	Direct information of storm damage: flooding or wind
No Reported Impact	Direct information of no storm damage
Status not Confirmed	No available information- site not accessible

To: R6Press[R6Press@epa.gov]
From: Durant, Jennah
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 3:17:46 PM
Subject: Daily News Digest, Thursday, September 28
Daily News Digest 092817.pdf

Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.

To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email R6Press@epa.gov.

1 — US, Mexico reach deal to conserve Colorado River water, ABC, 9/27/17

http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/us-mexico-reach-deal-conserve-colorado-river-water-50141722

The United States and Mexico unveiled an agreement Wednesday to preserve the overtaxed Colorado River, including spending millions of dollars on conservation and environmental projects and drawing up plans to deal with any shortages amid drought and climate change.

2 — Lawsuit says Army Corps should compensate homeowners for flooding their property with reservoir pools, Houston Chronicle, 9/27/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Lawsuit-says-Army-Corps-should-compensate-12235977.php

Government officials knew for years that water impounded behind Addicks and Barker dams would flood thousands of suburban homes during an extreme storm - and yet did nothing to warn or compensate property owners, according to a civil lawsuit that seeks monetary damages for affected homeowners.

3 — Documents detail concerns about Houston dams — before Harvey, Texas Tribune, 9/28/17

https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/28/could-houstons-dams-have-failed-during-harvey/

Just how worried is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about a possible failure of the Addicks and Barker dams? And how worried should Houston be?

4 — Why is Louisiana's coast shrinking so quickly?, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 9/28/17

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/why_is_the_louisiana_coast_shr.html#incart_river_index

As this video documents, there are many causes of land loss along Louisiana's coast, starting with the construction of levees along the Mississippi River that block the historic dispersal of sediment carried by the river during spring floods into open water and wetlands.

5 — More Mississippi River sediment will mean more problems for Louisiana shrimpers: study, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 9/28/17

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/more_river_sediment_will_mean.html#incart_river_index

Louisiana's quintessential shrimper - the independent, weather-beaten man with a small boat that's seen better days - may be the hardest hit by two sediment diversions planned on the Mississippi River.

6 — Air Force aids local authorities with Hurricane Harvey mosquito control, Houston Chronicle, 9/27/17

http://www.chron.com/news/politics/texas/article/Air-Force-aids-with-Hurricane-Harvey-mosquito-12232931.php

One of the United States Air Force's most recent missions took place over the skies of Texas, battling the smallest of airborne invaders: mosquitoes.

7 — Listen: What's zoning got to do with it?, Houston Chronicle, 9/27/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/real-estate/looped-in/article/Hurricane-Harvey-Looped-In-podcast-Houston-real-12232903.php

Before Hurricane Harvey's flood waters could even recede, the national media was reporting on Houston's lack of zoning and how it played a role in the floods. Local law professor, land use expert and repeat Looped In guest Matt Festa explains how that's a distorted argument.

8 — When polluting is in a company's rational self-interest, Houston Chronicle, 9/27/17

http://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/texanomics/article/When-polluting-is-in-a-company-s-

rational-12232286.php

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9 — Slideshow: For southeast Texas, recovery after Harvey is slow, Texas Tribune, 9/27/17

https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/27/slideshow-southeast-texas-recovery-after-harvey-slow/

(photo series)

10 — Trade dispute could turn solar boom into a bust, Albuquerque Journal, 9/27/17

https://www.abqjournal.com/1070045/trade-dispute-could-turn-solar-boom-into-a-bust-excerpt-hundreds-of-local-jobs-and-tens-of-thousands-nationally-are-at-stake.html

Solar industry leaders in New Mexico and nationally are anxiously awaiting a federal decision about imposing tariffs and price floors on imported solar cells and panels, which the national Solar Energy Industry Association says could potentially throw 88,000 U.S. employees out of work.

11 — Oka' Institute sustainability conference set for Oct. 10-11, Ada (OK) News, 9/28/17

http://www.theadanews.com/news/local_news/oka-institute-sustainability-conference-set-for-oct/article_b95b91c6-f0d6-55c1-8d19-67f0cf929945.html

The Chickasaw Business and Conference Center on East Central University's campus will be the setting for the 2017 Oka' Institute Sustainability Conference, Tuesday-Wednesday, Oct. 10-11.

12 — Tyson Settles Legal Battle with EPA, KNWA, 9/26/17

http://www.nwahomepage.com/news/tyson-settles-legal-battle-with-epa/819882612

Tyson Foods has settled a legal battle with the EPA over water pollution issues in Missouri. The Springdale-based food processing giant will pay $2.5 million in fines and restitutions. The lawsuit was filed after Tyson killed around 100,000 fish in a Missouri creek. The company also

admitted to two violations of the Clean Water Act.

13 — $300M chicken plant set for Northwest Arkansas, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 9/28/17

http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2017/sep/28/chicken-plant-set-for-near-gentry-20170/

Simmons Prepared Foods said Wednesday that it plans to expand its operations in Northwest Arkansas, spending $300 million on a high-tech chicken plant that will create 1,500 jobs.

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Thursday, September 28, 2017

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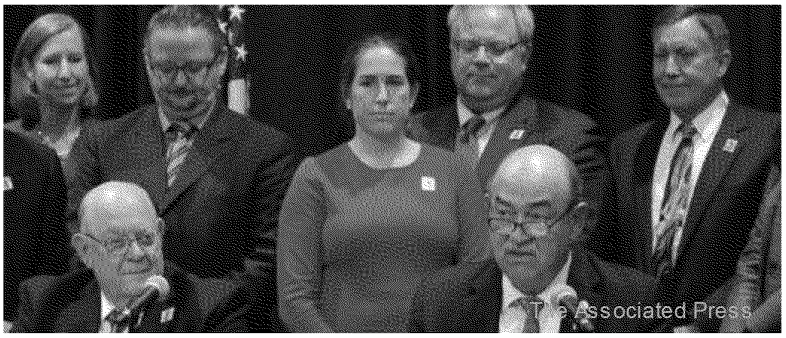
US, Mexico reach deal to conserve Colorado River water

By MORGAN LEE AND DAN ELLIOTT, ASSOCIATED PRESS
SANTA FE, N.M. — Sep 27, 2017, 9:57 PM ET



U.S. Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission Edward Drusina, right, seated, ...more +

The United States and Mexico unveiled an agreement Wednesday to preserve the overtaxed Colorado River, including spending millions of dollars on conservation and environmental projects and drawing up plans to deal with any shortages amid drought and climate change.

The United States pledged to invest $31.5 million in water conservation projects in Mexico, such as lining irrigation ditches with concrete to reduce leaks and upgrading irrigation equipment to use less water.

The water saved would be divided among the two nations and environmental projects.

In addition to the conservation savings, the agreement sets aside another 210,000 acre-feet (260 million cubic meters) of water for environmental projects. One acre-foot (1,200 cubic meters) is enough to supply a typical U.S. family for a year.

The two nations and a coalition of charitable foundations also agreed to contribute a total of $18 million for environmental restoration, research and monitoring.

The nine-year agreement is an amendment to a 1944 treaty that governs how the U.S. and Mexico share and manage the river, which flows through both nations. It expands on a 2012 amendment that expires at the end of this year.

Details of the new amendment were released at a water conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Colorado River is vital to the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico. It supplies water to about 40 million people and 6,300 square miles (16,300 square kilometers) of farmland in the U.S. alone. Equivalent figures for Mexico weren't immediately available.

The river begins in the Colorado mountains and winds 1,400 miles (2,250 kilometers) to the Mexican states of Sonora and Baja California.

The agreement is a commitment to future generations to solve the river's problems "so that they don't say that our generation stood there with our arms crossed," said Roberto Salmon, Mexico's representative on the International Boundary and Water Commission, a U.S.-Mexican organization that oversees the two nations' boundary and water treaties.

Salmon spoke in Spanish.

Edward Drusina, the U.S. representative, said the agreement provides more certainty to water managers struggling to deal with changing conditions.

"It is not necessarily the complete fix to the system because we don't know what lies around the corner," he said.

The agreement allows Mexico to store some of its share of the river water in Lake Mead in the United States if it cannot use it immediately. Mexico can withdraw it later, subject to some conditions.

That's important because Mexico has few reservoirs in the northwest part of the country, said Osvel Hinojosa of the Mexican conservation group Pronatura Noroeste.

"The idea is to conserve and store and try and avoid a shortage," Hinojosa said, speaking in Spanish.

The charitable foundations "are eager to do their share to make sure the agreement is implemented and successful," said Ted Kowalski, director of the Walton Family Foundation's Colorado River Initiative and one of the groups involved.

The others include the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the International Community Foundation and the Water Foundation.

Other provisions of the agreement:

— Both countries will draw up contingency plans to deal with any shortages of water in the river amid drought and climate change.

— Both countries agreed to share the burden of any shortages and the benefits of any surpluses in the Colorado River.

— The International Boundary and Water Commission will study ways to reduce salt levels in the Colorado River that reaches Mexico. The water picks up salt from the soil when it is used for irrigation and returned to the river; too much salt makes it unusable for agriculture and drinking.

Lawsuit says Army Corps should compensate homeowners for flooding their property with reservoir pools

Lawsuit: Residents never were warned about risks nor told to buy insurance

By Lise Olsen | September 27, 2017 | Updated: September 27, 2017 9:21pm

2

Photo: Craig Moseley, Staff

IMAGE 1 OF 2
Residents of the Cinco Ranch and Canyon Gate subdivisions evacuate from their homes that are near the west side of the Barker Reservoir in Fort Bend County on Aug. 29.

Government officials knew for years that water impounded behind Addicks and Barker dams would flood thousands of suburban homes during an extreme storm - and yet did nothing to warn or compensate property owners, according to a civil lawsuit that seeks monetary damages for affected homeowners.

The lawsuit was filed against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on behalf of Christina Micu, 37, a real estate investor who bought her own home in the Canyon Gate neighborhood of Cinco Ranch in February 2012. During Hurricane Harvey, the house was swamped by about 2 feet of water, she said. She said she didn't have flood insurance and was advised she didn't need it because her home was not in the 100-year flood plain.

Canyon Gate, with 721 homes, was one of the neighborhoods most heavily damaged when the Army Corps allowed the land area submerged behind the dams, called the "flood pool," to reach record size as more than 50 inches of rain fell between Aug. 25 and 29. Many residents of the gated community had to be evacuated by boat from deep floodwaters.

The suit was filed in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C., as a class action on behalf of everyone who owns property that flooded behind the two dams.

Other lawsuits have been brought on behalf of property owners downstream of Addicks and Barker dams, whose homes were flooded by water released through the dams' gates. The latest suit is the first to focus on damage caused by the reservoirs' flood pools.

Unaware of threat

More than 30,000 people own property and more than 140,000 live in areas Harris and Fort Bend county officials have identified as subject to inundation from the flood pools,

TRANSLATOR

To read this article in one of Houston's most-spoken languages, click on the button below.

Select Language ▼

according to a Chronicle analysis of evacuation orders issued during Harvey.

Many of those homeowners had no idea the pools posed a threat to their properties, and many did not have flood insurance. The Army Corps doesn't require home buyers to be notified of the risk from flood pools. Nor does Texas law. Nor do mortgage lenders' disclosure practices. Lenders typically require flood insurance for homes in the 100-year flood plain. There is no such requirement regarding flood pools.

In public meetings and in news releases, Corps officials defended their actions during Harvey as necessary to protect the city of Houston from catastrophic flooding. The Corps has subsequently referred all questions about its activities during Harvey to the U.S. Department of Justice. A DOJ spokesman declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Addicks and Barker dams, located 17 miles west of downtown Houston, were built in the 1940s to protect downtown Houston after catastrophic flooding in 1935 caused eight deaths and vast property damage. The dams hold back floodwaters from Buffalo Bayou, which forms the Houston Ship Channel downstream, and from creeks that enter the city from the northwest.

Unlike traditional "lake-forming" dams, Addicks and Barker do not have clearly defined reservoirs and are dry much of the year. The water they impound stretches west into what used to be prairie. The extent of the flood pool varies, depending on rainfall and on Army Corps decisions about how much water to release from the reservoirs.

During Harvey, the Corps deliberately allowed the flood pool to build up to a record 350,000 acre feet, the lawsuit said.

In the process, thousands of homes were damaged in Houston and in Fort Bend and Harris counties, though a full tally has not been released. At least 4,000 properties - including single-family homes, apartment complexes and businesses - were damaged by water from Barker reservoir alone, both counties said.

Ada, OK: This Brilliant Company Is Disrupting A $200 Billion Industry
EVERQUOTE

Corps: Releases necessary

Downstream, homes and buildings in the center of Houston were also flooded by releases from the dams the Corps deemed necessary to manage the massive storm.

Micu, the plaintiff in the class action, has become an activist post-Harvey, using social media to draw attention to flood-pool damage and her lawsuit. In an interview, she said she's taking a stand for herself and other homeowners who are struggling to make their mortgage payments, pay for emergency lodging and repair their homes, all without insurance.

"I'm suing the Army Corps of Engineers for taking a flood easement on my property and not compensating me or any of the previous owners," she said in a Facebook post. "I'm going to do what I believe is the right thing to do. Ultimately, I'm the one taking care of my family and no one else is."

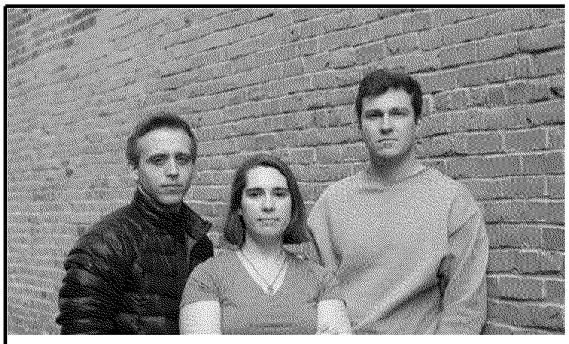
Elsewhere in the United States, the Army Corps has blocked development around its reservoirs - at times purchasing land for "flood storage easements" around dams or levees in areas where it

expects to divert or store floodwater, said Charles Irvine, the Houston-based lead attorney in the lawsuit.

That never happened here, and homeowners are owed compensation, Irvine argues.

"The Corps has been discussing this but no one took it beyond that - not in terms of disclosing it to the neighborhoods and certainly took no steps to offer to purchase a federal flood easement in exchange for some money," Irvine said.

A recent informational meeting about the case drew more than 100 homeowners from Canyon Gate and from other subdivisions that flooded during Hurricane Harvey, attorneys said. Irvine said that only five raised their hands when he asked who had flood insurance.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In Mississippi and Louisiana, the Corps has taken steps to inform people and compensate those whose property could be subject to inundation in areas near levees and rivers, Irvine said. That was not done with the West Houston dams.

Small-print warnings

Over the years, public officials continued to approve developments around both reservoirs even after the Corps' measurements recorded record flood pools time after time. Ten of the 11 largest pools in the reservoirs' history have been measured since 1990. Harvey generated the largest.

Fort Bend County officials added small-print warnings about the flood pools to subdivision maps beginning in 1994: "This subdivision is adjacent to Barker Reservoir and is subject to extended controlled inundation under the management of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."

But few home buyers consult the maps, known as plats. Harris County, which has far more homes threatened by the flood pool, never included advisories about the reservoirs on its plats.

Harris County Commissioner Steve Radack said he didn't believe warnings were necessary. He said all Harris County homeowners should be aware of risks of flooding posed by the area's many creeks and bayous - and by the reservoirs. Radack said that for 20 years he had been warning constituents about the flood pool, but most paid little attention.

"We knew the water would leave the federally controlled land and would flood neighborhoods in Fort Bend and Harris counties," he said. "The reservoir had never been tested to capacity."

Lise Olsen

Investigative Reporter,
Houston Chronicle

HEARST newspapers

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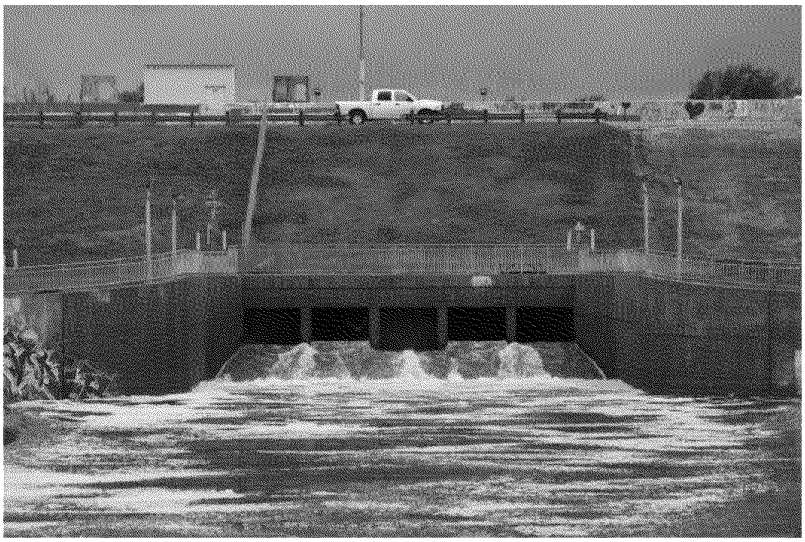
Documents detail concerns about Houston dams — before Harvey

How concerned is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the integrity of Addicks and Barker reservoirs? The agency has never answered the question clearly, but documents offer new clues.

BY NEENA SATIJA AND KIAH COLLIER SEPT. 28, 2017 9 HOURS AGO



An afternoon thunderstorm forms over Barker Dam and Reservoir, where construction is being done on its floodgates in Houston on Monday, Sept. 18, 2017. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released water from the dam three weeks earlier as historic rainfall from Hurricane Harvey filled the reservoir.
Michael Stravato for The Texas Tribune

Just how worried is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about a possible failure of the Addicks and Barker dams? And how worried should Houston be?

The agency has long been criticized for providing few specifics on that issue, even after it found voids in the walls of the dams years ago, and classified them in 2009 as "unsafe" with an "urgent and compelling" need for action.

Both dams withstood Hurricane Harvey's historic floods a month ago, but the Army Corps, which operates and maintains them, is offering little information about how the added stress may have affected the integrity of the dams — or how worried they were about them failing during the storm.

The two earthen structures in west Houston, built by the Army Corps in the 1940s, are designed to hold floodwaters and protect central Houston — but only during major

rainstorms. The land behind the dams is dry most of the time, dotted with parks, soccer fields and other recreational areas.

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Now both dams are holding back billions of gallons of floodwater from Harvey that will take months to safely release — something they weren't designed to do for more than short periods.

Want to help us cover the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey? Find out how you can help here.

"Addicks and Barker were not designed to impound large pools behind them for an extended period of time," an Army Corps official wrote in a 2011 email, which was made public through a lawsuit the Sierra Club filed against the Corps over a road project near the reservoirs. "These larger and longer lasting pools ... [are] increasing the threat to both dams."

Another Corps document, this one from 2010, shows that the agency was using terms like "risk of catastrophic failure" for the dams for flood events much smaller than what Houston experienced during Harvey.

That 2010 "interim reservoir control action plan" sets what it calls "maximum pool" levels for Addicks and Barker at elevations well under 100 feet, levels that could be expected during a 25-year storm — which has a 4 percent chance of occurring in any given year. Such a storm is about 30 times smaller than the rains generated by Harvey.

"The purpose of this ... is to reduce the risk of catastrophic failure by [releasing water from the dams] quicker and increasing embankment surveillance," the document says, adding that at 25-year levels, the dams "need to get additional attention."

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The document, which also became part of the 2011 Sierra Club lawsuit against the Army Corps, doesn't specify what the true risk of dam failure might be at such levels. It also

doesn't say what exact actions the Army Corps would take when water reached that point.

How the Corps reacts to rising water in the reservoirs has become the focal point of questions — and now lawsuits — following Harvey. Despite the Corps' reassurances about the dams during Harvey, many have wondered whether the fear of dam failure was the main factor in the agency's decision to release an unprecedented amount of water from the reservoirs, which caused thousands more homes to flood downstream than otherwise would have.

In public statements, the Corps indicated that some of the "controlled releases" were done to relieve stress on the dams. But it mostly said it was concerned that water would spill around the sides of the dams and be harder to control.

To Cynthia Neely, whose house flooded mostly due to the downstream releases, the reason is clear: "If the dams had failed, there wouldn't be a Houston at all," she said.

Corps officials declined to answer most questions about the 2010 document and its flood response procedures, citing lawsuits it is facing over how it operated the dams during Harvey, but they said the document is outdated.

Still, newer documents only reiterate that the Corps continues to be concerned about the integrity of the dams: "Studies conducted since 2004 have determined that the existing dams ... are a high risk of failure due to seepage and piping issues," the agency wrote in an undated report that references actions taken as late as 2012.

"I think that the documents, and I think that the issues, are clear," said Jim Blackburn, a Houston environmental lawyer who filed the Sierra Club lawsuit. "The consequences of failure are horrific, and it would be truly frightening to the public if they really knew what the worst-case scenario looked like."

Blackburn said the failure of the Army Corps to make the 2010 document public is just one example of the agency's hesitance to address the risk of a dam breach.

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"I think they have not wanted to have an honest conversation about it, for some reason."

Matthew Zeve, the Harris County Flood Control District's director of operations, said he had not seen the 2010 document before the Tribune sent him a copy. But he said he

didn't think the document expressed concern about the dams actually failing at such low water levels but rather indicated a "trigger" for when the agency should be continuously monitoring the dams and doing whatever it can to diminish risk.

“It’s not, ‘Oh, we think it’s going to fail,’” he said, stressing that he was not speaking for the Corps but offering his personal interpretation of the document.

People walk along the Barker Reservoir Dam in Houston on Tuesday, Aug 29, 2017. Torrential rains from Hurricane Harvey caused the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to release water from the reservoir, aggravating flooding in neighborhoods below the dam. Michael Stravato for The Texas Tribune

Even though the documents indicate the Corps was concerned about a 25-year rain event, the dams held up during Harvey, which was was an "800-year" storm, and in April 2016 they handled the Tax Day flood, which also pushed the reservoirs to levels far higher than the 25-year threshold.

But both of those floods created huge lakes behind the dams that would stay in place for months, and the Army Corps has long said that could be a problem.

In a 2016 interview with the Tribune, Richard Long, the reservoir project manager, said the reservoirs "were never intended to hold pools as large or for as long as they have in recent years."

Another Corps official, Robert Van Cleave, added at the time: "As the pool rises, that increases pressure on your foundation. As that happens over time, and the repetitive nature of the pools going up and down, that causes stress the original designers didn't anticipate."

After the Tax Day flood, it took months for the Corps to drain the reservoirs, and it will take even longer after Harvey.

In its most recent manual for operating the reservoirs, the Corps noted that "prolonged storage of rainfall" behind the dams in the past has "resulted in a serious seepage problem" through the permeable sections of the dam's walls, which are largely made of clay and sand. The Corps has plugged some of the voids where seepage might happen, but officials have said that many of those solutions are just "temporary measures."

Since 2009, the Army Corps has identified more than $100 million in major repairs needed in order to safely maintain the dams in the long term. Not all of those have happened yet. In 2015, a $74 million project to replace the dam's gates — sometimes known as "outlet works" — began, but the Army Corps said in mid-August that the project wouldn't be complete until February 2020. Now, after Harvey, the agency says the completion date has to be pushed back further.

It's unclear how much local and state officials have discussed the possibility of a dam failure. Asked if he had concerns about the integrity of the dams, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner told the Tribune in an interview this week that he hadn't studied the issue and that was a determination for the Corps to make.

A spokesman for Houston's emergency management office said the city does have an evacuation plan in place for such a scenario but did not elaborate. (Army Corps officials wrote in 2013 that Houston-area officials should develop evacuation plans for areas that might flood because of a dam breach.)

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who is from Houston, said in an interview that he asked the Corps about the prospect of dam failure in the "critical days" during Harvey and was told it's not a concern. "If they were worried about imminent failure, then I think they would be doing the responsible thing and telling the governor and telling me," he said.

Leonard Waterworth, former commander of the Army Corps' Galveston District, said the agency has done everything it can to address the issue but has been hamstrung by an uninterested Congress.

"Congress has the power of the purse string," said Waterworth, who is now a professor at Texas A&M University in Galveston. "So if it's important to Congress, they're going to fund it. If not, we need to find out another way to protect our people."

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

Why is Louisiana's coast shrinking so quickly?

Updated on September 28, 2017 at 6:11 AM
Posted on September 28, 2017 at 6:10 AM

1

By Mark Schleifstein, mschleifstein@nola.com,
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

As this video documents, there are many causes of land loss along Louisiana's coast, starting with the construction of levees along the Mississippi River that block the historic dispersal of sediment carried by the river during spring floods into open water and wetlands.

That was the main way the river built new land before humans "tamed" it.

The construction of jetties at the river's mouth keep sand bars from forming by narrowing and speeding the flow of water through Southwest Pass and South Pass. But those jetties also direct the river's sediment load offshore, making it less likely to drift back into coastal areas when it leaves the river.

The loss of sediment from both of those human-made causes reduces the chances that sediment from the river and new plant growth can overcome the natural subsidence, or sinking, of land in many locations along the coast.

Beginning soon after the turn of the 20th century, exploration and production of oil and gas in Louisiana's wetlands spurred the construction of more than 10,000 miles of canals that cris-crossed the state's wetlands. The spoil banks along those canals disrupted the natural flow of water and the canals acted as pathways for saltwater intrusion, both of which helped speed the loss of interior wetlands.

Watch the video for more information about the causes of land loss along the state's fragile coast.

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LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

More Mississippi River sediment will mean more problems for Louisiana shrimpers: study

Updated on September 28, 2017 at 6:58 AM
Posted on September 28, 2017 at 6:01 AM

Shrimpers and dock workers unload and measure shrimp at Ditcharo Jr. Seafoods in Buras, Thursday, May 18, 2017 and placed on a flatbed trailer. (Photo by Ted Jackson - NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune) (Ted Jackson)

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By Tristan Baurick, tbaurick@nola.com,
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

Louisiana's quintessential shrimper - the independent, weather-beaten man with a small boat that's seen better days - may be the hardest hit by two sediment diversions planned on the Mississippi River.

A new report indicates many shrimpers will need help adapting, possibly in the form of grants, subsidies and job re-training, once the diversions begin funneling fresh water and sediment into Barataria Bay and Breton Sound. The sediment is likely to alter the distribution, abundance and types of shrimp in areas where shrimpers have fished for decades.

Most vulnerable will be shrimpers with small, one-boat operations who are middle-aged or older and cannot easily transition to another career, according to the report by the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, a Baton Rouge-based nonprofit group.

Sediment diversions are a new and largely untested method of channeling river water rich in silt, sand and other sediments into estuaries that have been cut off from these land-building and land-restoring inputs. The Mississippi's

extensive levee system has, for more than a century, severely limited the flow of sediments into its delta, exacerbating the state's land loss crisis.

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority plans to build a series of sediment diversions along the lower Mississippi as part of the state's 50-year, $50 billion coastal plan. The $1 billion Mid-Barataria diversion would be the largest. Planned for the West Bank at Myrtle Grove, the project would divert as much as 75,000 cubic feet of sediment and water per second into Barataria Bay.

River levees have been a big factor in the bay's transformation. It's now saltier and less marshy, with larger expanses of open water than it had prior to the levee system. These changes may have benefited shrimpers, but the larger ecosystem has suffered, diversion advocates say.

The coastal authority's initial strategy of keeping the diversion open about half the year likely would have caused the rapid changes feared by the shrimpers and others, including fishers and oyster growers. A group of scientists tasked with helping the state develop its diversion plans recently recommended a slower, more measured approach that weighs land-building goals against the effects on fisheries.

The coalition's report is the first look at how a specific population segment would be affected by such diversions. The coalition hosted meetings and conducted surveys with shrimpers at five fishing communities in Plaquemines, Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes in April and May. Most of the 50 participants worry that diversions will push shrimp into deeper water, necessitating longer fishing trips in rougher conditions. Shrimp may also be smaller and fewer in number, shrimpers say.

Their concerns aren't unfounded. Diversions are designed to bring about large-scale environmental changes, and it's likely that alterations in water salinity, temperature, and other factors will shift shrimp populations, the report notes, citing research by the state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Coalition executive director Kimberly Reyher said diversions are "a vitally important project" for the state. Also important, she said, is Louisiana's shrimp industry, which leads the nation, netting 90 million pounds of shrimp in 2015, according to the most recent federal fisheries report. Despite the state's shrimping prowess, the catch was down 17 percent over the previous year and prices have fallen steeply over the past two decades.

"We need to make this critical strategy work for everyone (and) address concerns on the front end," Reyher said.

The coalition found that a shrimper's vulnerability is directly related to his or her business operation (boat size, gear types, trip lengths), age, English language skills, education and whether or not they or their family have alternative incomes.

"A shrimper who is much older, didn't finish high school and has only been a shrimper their whole life, and has invested significant capital in their business, is much higher on a scale of vulnerability and consequently less resilient," the report says.

Several of the report's participants were non-English speakers from Cambodia and Vietnam, or were illiterate, and would have a hard time tranitioning to a job outside commercial fishing.

To adapt, shimpers said they'd likely have to work more, catch more or find other sources of income. "These adaptations would constitute a sacrifice of quality of life" and could require large and risky investments, the report says.

Solutions proposed in the report included fuel subsidies or rebates and financial assistance to upgrade boats and gear. For shrimpers pushed out of the industry, the report proposed increased opportunities for job re-training, boat and house buyout programs, and help transitioning to other fisheries, such as crab and oysters.

A higher price for shrimp would also help. The report notes that dockside prices in Louisiana have fallen sharply as cheaper imports have flooded the U.S. market. Solutions to this problem included tariffs on imported shrimp and better marketing of domestic shrimp. Shimpers generally believe consumers would pay more for local shrimp if it was better promoted on restaurant menus and store packaging.

The Louisiana Shrimpers Association hopes the report will elevate shrimpers' concerns as the state develops its diversion plans.

"It is crucial for a plan to be made for fishermen who will be affected by diversions," said Acy Cooper, the association's president. "Fishermen and their families are at stake, and they need to be listened to."

Read the coalition's full report.

Tristan Baurick covers Louisiana's coastal environment for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune. Email: tbaurick@nola.com * Twitter: @tristanbaurick * Facebook: Tristan Baurick and Louisiana Coastal Watch.

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http://www.chron.com/news/politics/texas/article/Air-Force-aids-with-Hurricane-Harvey-mosquito-12232931.php

Air Force aids local authorities with Hurricane Harvey mosquito control

By Paul Cobler Updated 4:29 pm, Wednesday, September 27, 2017

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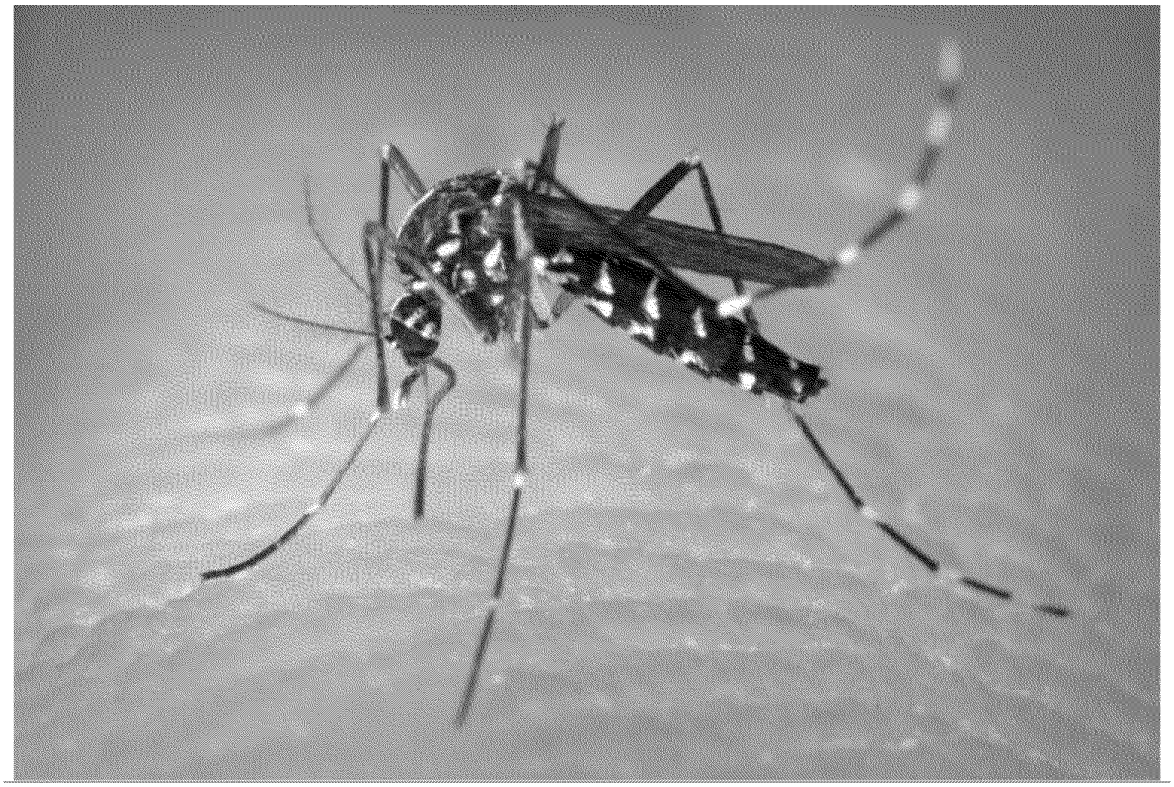

IMAGE 1 OF 3

Brazoria County officials and the U.S. Department of Defense are seeking to address mosquitoes in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

One of the United States Air Force's most recent missions took place over the skies of Texas, battling the smallest of airborne invaders: mosquitoes.

Local pest controls across the affected areas were quickly overwhelmed by the rains of Hurricane Harvey, leading to the Air Force Reserve Command's 910th Airlift Wing being called in to perform aerial sprays starting Sept. 8 across more than a million acres of land, according to Master Sgt. Bob Barko Jr., superintendent of public affairs for the wing.

"The last time that we did an area of this size was in 2005 in the aftermath of Katrina," Barko said.

Despite the magnitude of flooding from Harvey, the wing completed spraying Sept. 21, four weeks faster than the six-week operating time for Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Barko said.

"With Harvey we were able to bring in an extra aircraft and update some of our methods which enabled us to get about the same area done in a third of the time, about 2 weeks," Barko said. "It's a pest insect, and for the folks trying to rebuild and trying to repair the area, they were reporting about 40 mosquito bites a minute. After application, they were down to about five a minute."

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Dr. Mustapha Debboun, director of the Mosquito Control Division for Harris County Public Health, said local efforts were rendered ineffective after roads across the county closed due to flooding.

"In a situation like this, you have mosquitoes pretty much everywhere," Debboun said. "We couldn't use the trucks in some areas because they're under water. We need the aerial spray to go over and cover large areas."

The insecticide Naled was used for the spraying, but Debboun and Barko said there were never concerns of adverse human or environmental impacts because of the spray.

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We used this product three years ago, right here in Houston," Debboun said. "When we had a large number of West Nile Virus cases, I decided to use Naled to get rid of the mosquitoes. The only difference from 2014 to 2017 is we used smaller planes or contracted civilian planes. The only difference now is when people see a C-130, they worry, and they shouldn't."

Naled has been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency for use in the United States since 1959 and is one of the most widely used pesticides in the U.S. for mosquito control, according to the EPA's website. Naled is currently undergoing a routine re-evaluation by the EPA, as required by law, but the pesticide doesn't pose any significant threat to humans, pets or the environment when properly applied, according to the EPA's website.

In 2016, at least 2.5 million bees were killed in South Carolina due to Naled being sprayed at dawn, when bees are active, instead of dusk. Barko said the wing's operations took place at dusk over the two week operating period in Texas.

"The analogy is about a shot glass an acre, and it comes out in a very fine mist," Barko said. "The droplets are measured in microns and the product is designed the way we use it according to EPA direction, it evaporates before it even hits the ground."

Without the aid of the military, Debboun said he thinks the mosquito control operations would have been nearly impossible.

"This case is a unique case," Debboun said. "A Phenomenal case. A disaster case. This is Harvey. Harvey is a magnitude of a hurricane the world hasn't seen. When you have any huge flooding due to the magnitude of a hurricane, we can't do it all by ourselves. We do the best we can under the circumstances, but Harvey was not normal."

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TEXANOMICS

When polluting is in a company's rational self-interest

By Lydia DePillis | September 27, 2017

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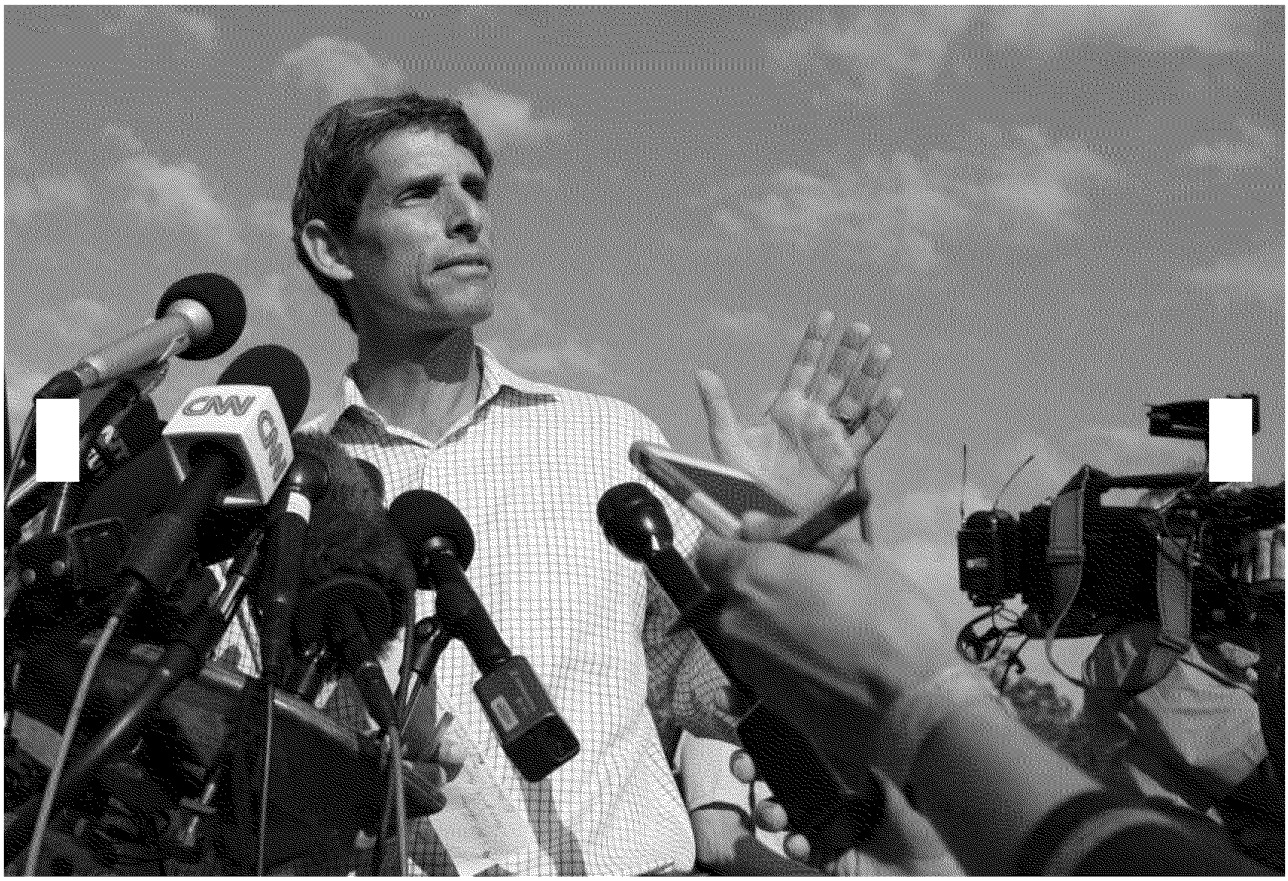

Photo: Godofredo A. Vasquez, Staff

IMAGE 1 OF 7
Richard Rennard, president of the acrylic monomers division at Arkema, talks to media about the explosion of organic peroxide inside the plant Thursday, Aug. 31, 2017, in Crosby,Texas.

This week, Harris County announced its intention to sue the French multinational chemical producer Arkema after volatile organic compounds exploded at its flooded plant in Crosby following Hurricane Harvey. The explosion sickened first responders with toxic fumes and exposed the surrounding area to untold amounts of contamination.

Public officials allege that, having had ample warning about the approaching storm, the company could've taken measures to neutralize the dangers before everything went so terribly wrong. Arkema strongly disagrees, saying it took every possible precaution — but if Harris County is right, it wouldn't be the first time a company weighed the benefits of doing the right thing and decided they didn't outweigh the potential costs.

That's the conclusion of a remarkable case study just released by researchers at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business on litigation faced by another chemical giant familiar to Houstonians: DuPont.

At this point, the long-running fight over DuPont's liability for diseases caused by releases of the compound known as C8, which is used in the production of Teflon for products such as non-stick pans, have received significant public attention. The New York Times, the Huffington Post, and the Intercept have all detailed the suffering of DuPont's former workers and residents of communities on the banks of the Ohio River, into which the chemical was released for decades.

RELATED: SEC sanctions Dallas company on claims of Harvey relief activities

But back in the 1980s, when the company was just starting to find out about the risks of C8 — which it only stopped using in 2013 — DuPont's scientists and executives were the only ones who knew.

Reams of internal documents were revealed in the course of the 3,550-person class action lawsuit, which settled for $671 million earlier this year. Memos and meeting minutes showed that DuPont had been repeatedly warned about the potential impacts of C8 on human health, particularly pregnant women. (Later, independent scientists found probable links between C8 contamination in Ohio and West Virginia and diseases such as ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, and testicular and kidney cancer).

However, the documents also showed that ceasing the use of C8 would be costly, and the likelihood of being found out was low.

Specifically, the University of Chicago researchers used DuPont's own financial estimates to calculate that expected profits from continuing to use C8 vastly outweighed the potential cost from any damages paid as a result of litigation, given that the chances of a lawsuit succeeding were slim.

"Currently, none of the options developed are...economically attractive and would essentially put the long-term viability of this business segment on the line," read an internal memo from 1984. "From a broader corporate viewpoint, the costs are small."

To this day, DuPont maintains that it did nothing wrong. In a statement about the University of Chicago paper provided to the Chronicle, spokesman Daniel Turner said that the C8 trials and settlement had not been decided on the basis of "actual scientific evidence" about the effects of exposure to the chemical, which is still not regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Documents cited in the paper reflect that actions taken by DuPont, at all relevant times, were guided by the company's good faith belief that low levels of C8 exposure do not pose a health hazard," Turner said.

THERE WAS CONSENSUS REACHED THAT THE ISSUE WHICH WILL DECIDE FUTURE ACTION IS ONE OF CORPORATE IMAGE, AND CORPORATE LIABILITY. LIABILITY WAS FURTHER DEFINED AS THE INCREMENTAL LIABILITY FROM THIS POINT ON IF WE DO NOTHING AS WE ARE ALREADY LIABLE FOR THE PAST 32 YEARS OF OPERATION. CORPORATE IMAGE DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND THE PERCEIVED DILIGENCE VERSUS OUR POLICIES IF WE ELECTED TO STOP WORK.

CURRENTLY, NONE OF THE OPTIONS DEVELOPED ARE, FROM A FINE POWDER BUSSINESS STANDPOINT, ECONOMICALY ATTRACTIVE AND WOULD ESSENTIALLY PUT THE LONG TERM VIABILITY OF THIS BUSSINESS SEGMENT ON THE LINE. FROM A BROADER CORPORATE VIEWPOINT THE COSTS ARE SMALL.

A section of a DuPont meeting memo on C8 from 1984 released as part of litigation settled in 2017.

In recent months, corporate screwups have gained the public's attention relatively quickly — think fake accounts at Wells Fargo, or the massive data breach at Equifax — and resulted in severe fallout, including the firing of chief executives and enormous reputational damage.

But in the case of something like environmental contamination, public relations crises aren't inevitable. It takes decades and significant financial resources to discover and prove that a particular chemical release made people sick. (It's perhaps indicative that Arkema has refused to make its chemical inventory available to the public.)

Media attention isn't usually sustainable over that kind of timeframe, beyond which executives are usually long gone anyway. That's why, in the moment, it can make perfect sense for executives to keep engaging in risky but lucrative behavior, and for shareholders to look the other way.

"This conclusion is disturbing," write the authors, law professor Roy Shapira and economist Luigi Zingales. "If the decision to pollute is not a product of incompetence or myopic fly-by-night companies, but rather a calculated, rational decision by a reputable company, perhaps socially harmful corporate behavior is more endemic and less solvable than we acknowledge."

Shapira and Zingales do have some ideas for fixing the problem. Imposing fines for delays in disclosing harmful mistakes (or intentional wrongdoing) would lower the barriers to bringing successful legal actions. Individually prosecuting executives would make them think harder about the risk to their personal fortunes. Promoting whistleblowing and resisting gag orders on settlements would help information come to light more quickly.

Such measures would come too late for the Arkema debacle, and for the many other toxic releases that have likely resulted from the Gulf Coast's refining and petrochemical industries. But they might at least give citizens greater recourse, and down the road, shift the calculus that prompts corporations to take such risks in the first place.

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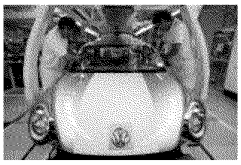
TEXANOMICS

When polluting is in a company's rational self-interest



Does it matter if imports from Mexico are actually made of U.S.

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Delivery alert until NaN

Trade dispute could turn solar boom into a bust

By Kevin Robinson-Avila / Journal Staff Writer

Published: Wednesday, September 27th, 2017 at 11:40pm
Updated: Wednesday, September 27th, 2017 at 11:39pm

Albuquerque-based Array Technologies supplied solar tracking systems for the majority of this 80-acre power plant near Alamosa, Colo. (Courtesy of Array Technologies)

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Solar industry leaders in New Mexico and nationally are anxiously awaiting a federal decision about imposing tariffs and price floors on imported solar cells and panels, which the national Solar Energy Industry Association says could potentially throw 88,000 U.S. employees out of work.

That includes hundreds in New Mexico, where local solar equipment manufacturers and installation companies are bracing for price hikes on cells and panels that could dramatically slash market demand.

Companies in the utility-scale solar market, like Array Technologies, would be most affected by any new tariffs as cells and panels account for about half the cost of large-scale systems. (Dean Hanson/Journal)

Albuquerque-based Array Technologies Inc. says it could be forced to cut up to two-thirds of the 300 people it employs in local operations, which include a 70,000-square-foot manufacturing plant. Array makes solar trackers that tilt and turn panels to follow the sun, increasing electric output from photovoltaic systems.

"We're facing a huge impact," said Array President and CEO Ron Corio. "This could kill the domestic market for us."

The International Trade Commission in Washington, D.C., ruled Friday that cheap solar panel imports, mostly from China and other Asian countries, have harmed domestic producers. The commission will now recommend import tariffs or other relief measures to President Donald Trump, who will make the final decision.

U.S. industry leaders say tariffs and price floors might help a few domestic panel makers, but it would devastate the rest of the industry, which employs about 260,000 workers in everything from equipment supply to system installation. About 14 percent are in manufacturing, but only a few of them are in solar cell or panel production.

About 3,000 people are employed in New Mexico at more than 100 firms, according to the national Solar Foundation. That includes 16 manufacturers for things like trackers, mounting systems and electrical components.

Cheap imports have helped cut prices for solar cells and panels by about 70 percent since 2010, generating a huge, yearslong boom in solar development nationwide. If the levies requested by the ITC petitioners are approved, projected solar development over the next five years would fall by about two-thirds, from an estimated 72.5 gigawatts of new capacity now expected to come online to just 25 gigawatts, according to GTM Research in Boston, which tracks market trends for the Solar Energy Industry Association.

The issue arose from two bankrupt panel makers operating in the U.S. – Suniva and SolarWorld Americas. They petitioned the ITC for two new import levies, including a 40-cent-per-watt tariff on solar cells and a price floor on fully assembled solar panels equal to 78 cents per watt.

There are no broad tariffs on imports today, and panels currently cost about 38 cents per watt. If the government imposes those measures, it would effectively double the price for solar cells and panels, said Regina Wheeler, CEO of the local installation firm Sunpower by Positive Energy Solar.

A typical solar panel of between 300 watts and 400 watts currently costs between $120 and $160 wholesale. With the new levies, that would climb to between $240 and $320, Wheeler said.

Both the petitioning companies are majority-owned by foreign firms – SolarWorld by a German company and Suniva by Hong Kong-based Shunfeng International Clean Energy. Ironically, Shunfeng opposes the ITC petition, but it's backed by UK-based venture firm SQN Capital, which wants to recover a $55 million investment in Suniva.

Companies in the utility-scale solar market, like Array, would be most affected, because cells and panels account for about half the cost of large-scale systems. Array's pipeline of projects is based on today's price of 38 cents a watt, Corio said.

Ron Corio, CEO of Array Technologies

"At 78 cents a watt, our project pipeline would simply go away," Corio said.

Residential and commercial-scale solar businesses might be less affected, but their markets could also suffer, said Ryan Centerwall, CEO of Albuquerque-based installation company Affordable Solar. Affordable also manages utility-scale projects, such as three solar facilities it's developing for Public Service Company of New Mexico to supply electricity to Facebook in Los Lunas.

"This is a meaningful threat to our business, and to the industry as a whole," Centerwall said, although he declined to discuss the impact on the PNM Facebook contract.

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Oka' Institute sustainability conference set for Oct. 10-11

Submitted Story 1 hr ago

The Chickasaw Business and Conference Center on East Central University's campus will be the setting for the 2017 Oka' Institute Sustainability Conference, Tuesday-Wednesday, Oct. 10-11.

This year the, institute is excited to offer two optional tours as well as a student research poster competition. Participants can choose to tour Byrds Mill Spring or the EPA Robert S. Kerr Environmental Research Center, both located in Ada, on Tuesday afternoon beginning at 1 p.m. The Student Research Poster Competition is for undergraduate students from regional universities in the state of Oklahoma and will kick off the evening at 4.

The poster competition will continue through the 5 p.m. reception, followed by dinner at 6 p.m., when Chickasaw Nation Gov. Bill Anoatubby will deliver the keynote address shortly after dinner. Anoatubby will be introduced by Chancellor Glen Johnson, of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Featured speakers for Wednesday, Oct. 11 include Dr. David Zoldoske, executive director of water initiatives at California State University-Fresno and Stephen Greetham, executive officer, general counsel to the Chickasaw Nation Division of Commerce. Zoldoske will give the luncheon keynote, and Greetham will be giving the morning keynote.

Activities continue Wednesday with two panel discussions: Policy/Projects that Move Oklahoma Forward, where we will hear from Owen Mills and Dr. Saba Tahmassebi, and Data and Research that Move Oklahoma Forward in which Cody Holcomb, Duane Smith and Dr. Bill Andrews will speak.

Other topics to be discussed include drought contingency, ecosystem services of the Oklahoma Blue River, trends and major issues in water law and policy and water cluster development. Also scheduled to speak are Kris Patton, Dr. Barney Austin, Tom Graham, Tom Lokey and Jona Tucker. Dr. Richard Lowrance, with the Robert S. Kerr Environmental Research Center, along with Dr. Randall Ross, Dr. Jim Weaver, Dr. Steve Hutchins, and Dr. Tim Canfield, will address the various ways the USEPA is moving Oklahoma forward.

In addition, the ECU faculty Summer Research Opportunity award winners, Dr. Randall Maples, Dr. James Bruce Moring, Dr. Terrie Becerra, Dr. Erick Ananga and Dr. Nicholas Jacob, will give a final report on their research. To end the day, a legislative panel made up of Sen. Greg McCortney, Sen. Frank Simpson, Rep. Todd Thomsen and Rep. Brian Renegar will address water policy at the Capitol.

This conference has been approved for seven CLE credits from the Oklahoma Bar Association. Professional Engineer continuing education credits will also be offered.

Registration for the full conference is $200 per person, which includes dinner on Oct. 10 and a light breakfast and lunch on Oct. 11. Various ticket options and prices are also available. Registration closes on Oct. 2. You can register at www.okainstitute.org/2017-sustainability-conference.

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This Week's Circulars

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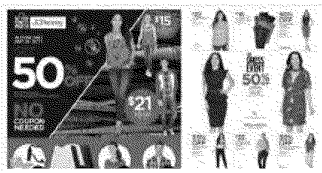

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Ada News Events

THU 28 East Central: Soccer vs. Southern…
East Central Unive... | Ada, OK

THU 28 President's Club Meeting
East Central Unive... | Ada, OK

THU 28 East Central: Volleyball vs. Southe…
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SAT 30 PEC Day at Pontotoc Agri-Plex
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Randy Mitchell

$300M chicken plant set for Northwest Arkansas

Simmons Foods plans 1,500 jobs

By Nathan Owens
This article was published today at 4:30 a.m.

2

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SILOAM SPRINGS -- Simmons Prepared Foods said Wednesday that it plans to expand its operations in Northwest Arkansas, spending $300 million on a high-tech chicken plant that will create 1,500 jobs.

The plant will be built between Decatur and Gentry and will employ 2,300 workers by 2022, the company said. The 315,000-square-foot facility will produce roughly 850 million pounds of fresh and frozen chicken products annually.

Simmons Foods, the parent company of Simmons Prepared Foods, also said it has plans to increase starting pay at production facilities later this year.

Some processing operations in Decatur will shift to the new chicken facility when construction at the 870-acre site is completed in 2019, Simmons Foods said.

The company said it will create new contracts with local chicken growers to meet the plant's output. Hundreds of chicken houses will be needed in the area to meet Simmons Foods' production goals.

This project is supported by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, the Arkansas Development Finance Authority and the state's Department of Transportation.

ADVERTISING

According to the state's economic development proposal, the project qualified for four financial incentives: a seven-year payroll rebate program; a sales and use tax refund on construction

materials; a grant program for the facility's new infrastructure and the extension of water and wastewater lines from the city of Decatur; and a partnership with the Transportation Department to add a turning lane and stoplight at Arkansas 59 and Y City Road.

Simmons Foods affiliates operate a feed mill, hatchery, chicken processor and a dry pet food facility in Decatur.

The privately owned company hasn't disclosed when it will start construction on the project.

Two months ago, subsidiary Simmons Feed Ingredients broke ground on a new pet food ingredient facility in Siloam Springs. That project will mean 78 new jobs for the area.

"Simmons Foods is one of those families that makes Northwest Arkansas what it is today," said Barry Moehring, county judge for Benton County.

"We are happy to facilitate that."

Wednesday's announcement comes a week after the sudden closing of the Sager Creek Vegetable plant in Siloam Springs that employed more than 230 people.

"We had a plant close, and that was bad news," Gov. Asa Hutchinson said during a Wednesday afternoon news conference. "But now we can adjust to that."

On Sept. 20, Del Monte Foods announced that it had sold its Sager Creek subsidiary to McCall Farms Inc. The Siloam Springs production plant, which employed 238 people, closed immediately after Del Monte's announcement.

Wayne Mayes, president and chief executive officer of the Siloam Springs Chamber of Commerce, said last week that other companies, including Simmons Foods, would help displaced workers find new jobs.

"Some jobs move on, some move in -- and this one is a great success story," Hutchinson said.

At an event near Hot Springs earlier Wednesday, Hutchinson said the number of people employed in Arkansas has reached an all-time high.

"Our aggressive recruiting nationally and around the world is paying off as more and more industries expand or relocate to Arkansas," Hutchinson said. "From our computer science initiative to the state's strong workforce, companies are taking notice. While there's always more work to be done, these statistics are a good indication that Arkansas' economy continues to trend in the right direction, and -- more importantly -- that Arkansans are finding work."

Simmons Foods said it chose the Arkansas location over potential sites in Oklahoma and Missouri. Based in Siloam Springs, the company employs about 3,700 people in Arkansas.

To: Hurricane Harvey Principals[Hurricane_Harvey_Principals@epa.gov]
Cc: Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
From: Restivo, Angela
Sent: Tue 8/29/2017 10:32:03 PM
Subject: Hurricane Harvey 1700 Update 8/29/2017
8-29-17 1700Update Final.pdf

Tropical Storm Harvey 2017
8/29/2017 – 1700 CDT Update

Highlights

Texas

EPA is currently monitoring a situation at the Arkema Facility in Crosby, Texas. EPA was notified by our representative at the State Operations Center. The facility is without power and has lost their backup power source for one of the containers. The contents of that container is approaching auto-ignition temperatures and could potentially detonate within the next 24 hours. The area is evacuated due to flooding, local first responders are in the area conducting search and rescue. These personnel are currently being evacuated from the area. EPA is working with the Department of Homeland Security to develop plume modeling to provide to local responders.

Four EPA Region 6 Incident Management Team members are mobilizing to Corpus Christi, Texas today to establish unified command. The team will rendezvous with TCEQ and the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) counterparts as well as US Coast Guard personnel to form a unified command.

Members from the National Incident Management Assistance Team (NIMAT)arrived in Dallas August 29,2017 and is integrated into the Incident Management Team structure.

Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) vehicle is enroute from North Carolina to assist with air monitoring in the impacted areas throughout Texas and is scheduled to arrive by Friday, September 1, 2017.

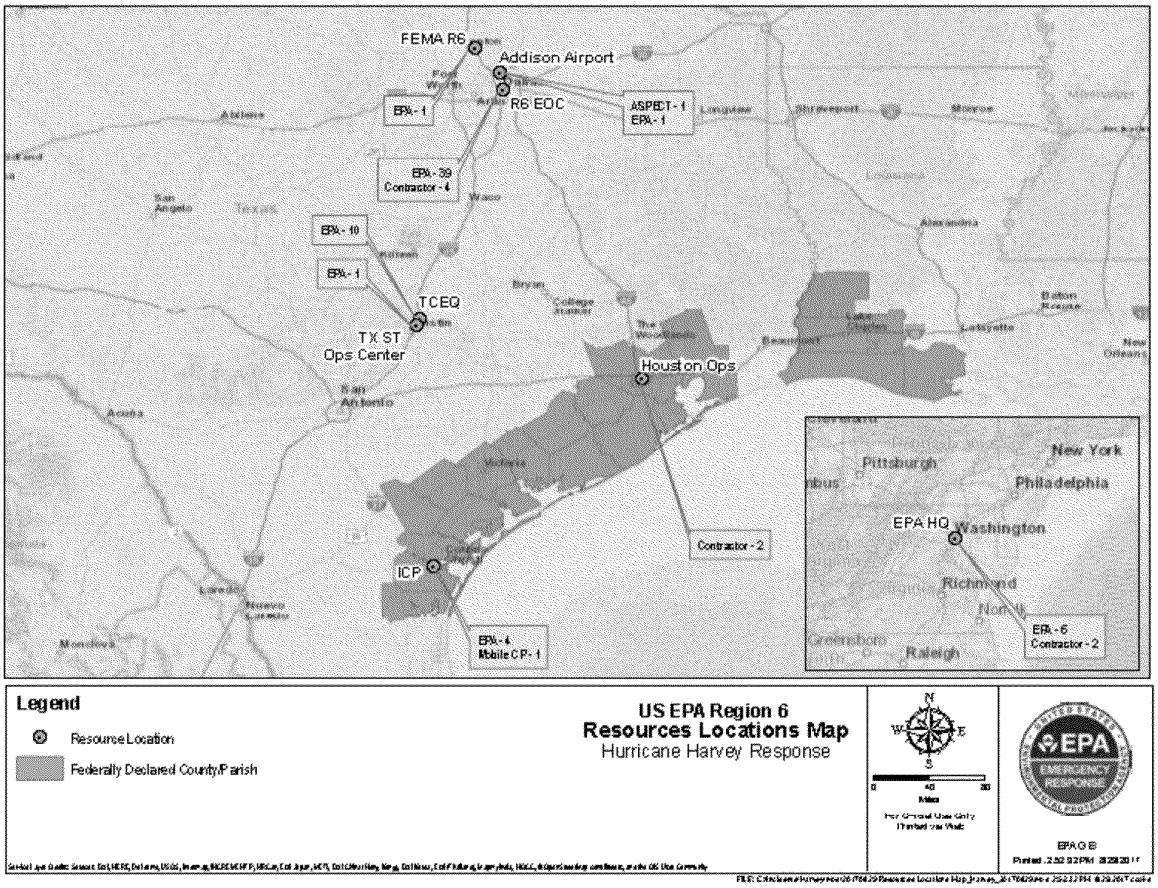
Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is monitoring for possible flooding. They are ready to respond if needed. As of August 29, 2017 no additional parishes have been declared.

Resources

As of Tuesday, August 29, 2017 at 1700.

Personnel	EPA Dallas, TX	FEMA Denton, TX	Texas SOC Austin, TX	TCEQ Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Corpus Christi, TX	HQ EOC Wash DC	Totals
EPA	39	1	1	10		4	6	61
START	3				2	2		7
IT Contractor	1						2	3
TOTAL	43	1	1	10	2	4	8	69



Industrial Sources

On August 29, 2017, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality reported that Valero's Corpus Christi refinery will begin start up operations over the next four to six days. During this start-up procedure they will be running at 60% capacity.

Spill/Release Response

Hotline Calls as of 1500 on August 29, 2017	
Number of Harvey Related Calls Received During Reporting Period	8
Total Number of Harvey Related Calls to Date	36

EPA Emergency Response Assets

EPA's aerial assessment aircraft, is activated and will conduct aerial reconnaissance over the Corpus Christi area starting today, August 29, 2017, as weather permits

Surface and Flood Water Quality Monitoring

EPA has drafted incident specific surface and flood water sampling plan to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminates found in storm water. The plan has been provided to Headquarter for review.

Drinking Water / Wastewater Assessments

Preparing to mobilize teams to assist with drinking water and waste water field assessments as soon as field conditions allow.

EPA is supporting TCEQ in contacting drinking water and waste water systems. Current status as of 1700 on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. EPA deployed 10 personnel to assist TCEQ's Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin, Texas.

Drinking Water - Total # of Systems: 4422

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending	43
Out of Contact	27
On generator – lost pressure	3
No problems	172
On generator – never lost pressure	9
No Status	4141
Lost pressure & or Treatment	4
Site visit needed	2
Lifted Boil Water Notice due to negative. BacT samples. Normal ops resumed	3
Not Operating	18

Waste Water - Total # of Systems: 2453

STATUS	NUMBER OF SYSTEMS
Contact Pending - Phone evaluation only	18
Out of Contact - phone evaluation only	9
No Problems	179
No Status	2226
WWTP and/or Collection on Generator or bypass pumps for Lift Station	15
WWTP and/or Collection nonoperational no Sanitary Sewer Overflow	2
WWTP and/or Collection Partially Operational Sanitary Sewer Overflow	4

EPA Laboratory/ Analytical Services

The Houston laboratory is reporting that they will be closed until Tuesday September 5, 2017. The laboratory and office building is not damaged. EPA has back up capabilities for laboratory services should the Houston facility remain closed.

EPA's organic chemical mobile laboratory is enroute from Denver, Colorado to the Corpus Christi area. The anticipated arrival in Corpus Christi is Friday September 1, 2017. The mobile laboratory can be utilized to process environmental samples.

Data Management

Region 6 activated the National Data team to provide support data management activities in Corpus Christ. Two Data Team members have been deployed and are expected to arrive in Corpus Christi by Friday September 1, 2017.

Communications

EPA is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA communication structure and management, and participates in the daily National Incident Communication Conference Line (NICCL) call. EPA has initiated its Crisis Communication Plan to ensure rapid response to providing coordinated, accurate, up-to-date information regarding its field activities. EPA Public Information Office will be established in Dallas with forward field components as needed to support the HQ Office of Public Affairs.

Refineries/Fuel Waivers

EPA approved requests for fuel waivers for Texas, and Oklahoma, Louisiana within hours of receipt.

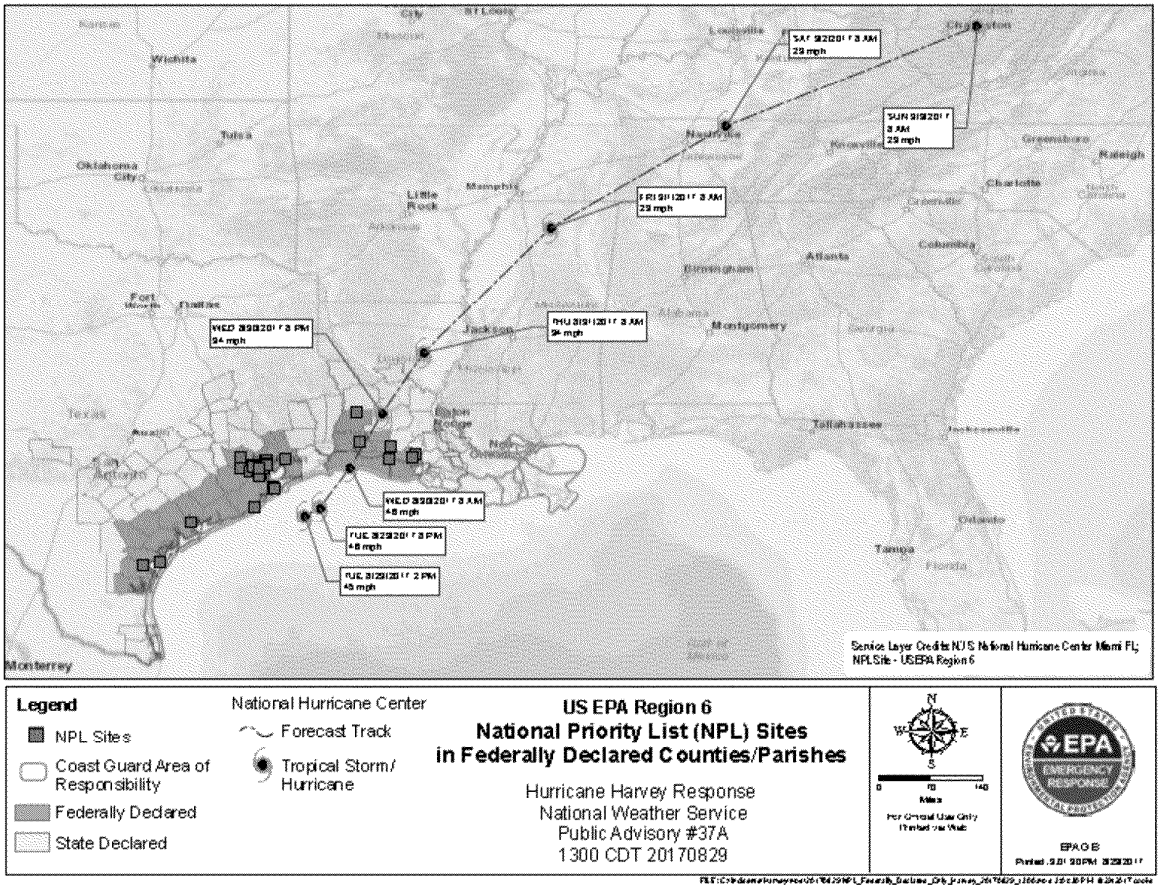
On August 29, 2017, EPA approved an additional fuel waiver request from the State of Texas regarding the use of Red Dyed 15ppm Non-Road Diesel Locomotive and Marine Fuel in the State of Texas.

Funding

EPA has received a Mission Assignment (MA) to assist the State of Texas with drinking water, wastewater and Hazmat recovery operations. This Mission Assignment for $8.5 million added 170 EPA and USCG personnel to the TCEQ Hurricane Harvey response in Corpus Christi, Houston and surrounding impacted areas. This MA is for support of assessment and response operations to actual or threatened spill or release of hazardous materials and oil. Assistance includes response to release/discharges from fixed facilities, as well as orphaned containers and mobile sources.

Superfund NPL Sites

Region 6 Remedial Project Managers continue to monitor and assess the status of NPL sites in the impacted areas. Some sites continue to be inundated with flood water. Assessments of those site will be conducted as flood waters recede. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site is experiencing severe flooding. The highest point of the temporary cap is under 5-feet of flood water. Floodwaters are not expected to recede for several days.



Superfund Sites within Federally Declared Counties **8/29/2017**

SITE NAME	STATE	COUNTY	STATUS SUMMARY
ALCOA (Point Comfort) / LAVACA BAY	TX	CALHOUN	No Reported Impact
BRINE SERVICE CO.	TX	NUECES	Impacted
BRIO REFINING INC.	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
CRYSTAL CHEMICAL CO.	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
DIXIE OIL PROCESSORS INC.	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
FALCON REFINERY	TX	SAN PATRICIO	Impacted
FRENCH, LTD.	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
GENEVA INDUSTRIES / FUHRMANN ENERGY	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
GULFCO MARINE MAINTENANCE	TX	BRAZORIA	Status not Confirmed
HARRIS (FARLEY STREET)	TX	HARRIS	Status not Confirmed
HIGHLANDS ACID PIT	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
JONES ROAD GROUNDWATER PLUME	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
MALONE SERVICES COMPANY	TX	GALVESTON	Impacted
MANY DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS, INC	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
MOTCO, INC.	TX	GALVESTON	Status not Confirmed
NORTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
PATRICK BAYOU	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
PETRO-CHEMICAL SYSTEMS, INC. (Turtle Bayou)	TX	LIBERTY	Impacted
SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
SIKES DISPOSAL PITS	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
SOL LYNN / INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMERS	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
SOUTH CAVALCADE STREET	TX	HARRIS	No Reported Impact
TEX-TIN CORP.	TX	GALVESTON	Impacted
US OIL RECOVERY	TX	HARRIS	Impacted
AMERICAN CREOSOTE DERIDDER	LA	BEAUREGARD	No Reported Impact
GULF STATE UTILITIES (North Ryan Street)	LA	CALCASIEU	No Reported Impact
MALLARD BAY LANDING BULK PLANT	LA	CAMERON	No Reported Impact
SBA SHIPYARD	LA	JEFFERSON DAVIS	No Reported Impact
PAB OIL & CHEMICAL SERVICE	LA	VERMILION	No Reported Impact
GULF COAST VACUUM SERVICES	LA	VERMILION	No Reported Impact
D.L. MUD, INC.	LA	VERMILION	No Reported Impact

Legend of NPL Site Status Summary Indicators	
Impacted	Direct information of storm damage: flooding or wind
No Reported Impact	Direct information of no storm damage
Status not Confirmed	No available information- site not accessible

region6news

Monday, September 25, 2017

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribal Nations

Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.
To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email R6Press@epa.gov.

1 — The fault that produced North Texas' largest quake could produce an even bigger one, study says, Dallas Morning News, 9/25/17
https://www.dallasnews.com/news/science-medicine/2017/09/25/fault-produced-north-texas-largest-quake-produce-even-bigger-one-study-says
The town that experienced a 4-magnitude earthquake in May 2015 — the strongest quake ever recorded in North Texas — sits on a fault with the potential to produce an event 10 times larger, suggests a new study led by scientists at Southern Methodist University. The report also concluded there was "substantial evidence" that the quake, near the Johnson County town of Venus, was triggered by the underground disposal of wastewater from oil and gas operations.

2 — Navajo Nation Artists Respond to the Threat of Uranium Radiation, Hyperallergic, 9/22/17
https://hyperallergic.com/401017/navajo-nation-artists-respond-to-the-threat-of-uranium-radiation/
Nuclear contamination from abandoned uranium mines is rampant across the Navajo Nation, and a community of artists is raising awareness through a street art project and gallery exhibition.

4 — Barrier put in mine that sent toxic water into 3 states, Amarillo Globe News, 9/22/17
http://amarillo.com/national-news/2017-09-22/barrier-put-mine-sent-toxic-water-3-states
he U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is installing a barrier and valve inside an inactive Colorado mine to prevent another surge of wastewater like a 2015 blowout that contaminated rivers in three states. The 12-inch valve will regulate wastewater pouring from the Gold King Mine in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado, where the EPA inadvertently triggered a wastewater spill while excavating at the mine entrance in August 2015.

5 — Arkansas Defies Monsanto, Moves To Ban Rogue Weedkiller, KSTX, 9/22/17
http://tpr.org/post/arkansas-defies-monsanto-moves-ban-rogue-weedkiller#stream/0
Arkansas is on the verge of banning the use, during the growing season, of a Monsanto-backed weedkiller that has been blamed for damaging millions of acres of crops in neighboring farms this year. The weedkiller is called dicamba. It can be sprayed on soybeans and cotton that have been genetically modified to tolerate it. But not all farmers plant those new seeds. And across the Midwest, farmers that don't use the herbicide are blaming their dicamba-spraying neighbors for widespread damage to their crops — and increasingly, to wild vegetation.

6 — EPA Clarifies FEMA Statement On Texas Toxic Sites, CBS DFW, 9/25/17
http://dfw.cbslocal.com/2017/09/24/epa-fema-texas-toxic-sites/
The Environmental Protection Agency said Sunday it has recovered 517 containers filled with unidentified, potentially hazardous material found floating in or washed up along Texas waterways after the devastating floods from Hurricane Harvey receded. The agency's statement sought to clarify an earlier media release saying the containers were recovered from highly contaminated toxic waste sites.

7 Colorado landfills are illegally burying low-level radioactive waste from oil and gas industry, Denver Post learns, Denver Post, 9/22/17
http://www.denverpost.com/2017/09/22/colorado-landfills-illegally-burying-radioactive-waste-oil-gas/
Colorado landfills have been illegally burying low-level radioactive waste from the oil and gas industry that they are not approved to handle, state health officials revealed this week. State health regulators, confirming at a meeting with local governments the disposal of unknown amounts at ordinary landfills, are trying to prohibit the practice and buttress their oversight. Colorado's booming oil and gas industry produces millions of tons of waste, some of it radioactive, and both waste producers and landfill operators are obligated to handle it properly.

8 Questions Surround Chromium At LANL, $9M Project Brings More Water To Navajo Communities, KUNM, 9/25/17
http://kunm.org/post/questions-surround-chromium-lanl-9m-project-brings-more-water-navajo-communities
A top official with the U.S. Energy Department says the agency is still uncertain about the extent of contamination from a massive plume of chromium that resulted from decades of poor waste management at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Doug Hintze with the Energy Department's environmental management field office in Los Alamos told state lawmakers during a recent hearing that cancer-causing chromium and other chemicals have continued to seep from the soil in Mortandad Canyon into the groundwater.

9 Carp, clams and crested floating-hearts: Louisiana on alert for invasive species, Times Picayune, 9/23/17
http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/hurricane_harvey_invasive_species.html#incart_river_index
Hurricane Harvey flushed thousands of people from their homes in southeast Texas. It might also have flushed common carp, Asian clams and a flower called the crested floating-heart across the Texas boarder into Louisiana. That's the premise behind a new web-based application developed by the U.S. Geological Survey to track invasive species. It assumes that Harvey's floodwaters created news pathways by which aquatic species could move from one body of water to another.

10 OPINION: Ignoring science won't end environmental problems, Times Picayune, 9/24/17
http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/09/climate_science.html#incart_river_index
This just in: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Urged on by cheering crowds in Make America Great Again caps and GOP congressmen from oil producing states, President Trump last night stood on the steps of the Environmental Protection Agency Building and proclaimed "Carbon today! Carbon tomorrow! Carbon forever!" He then put a torch to a 100-foot tall stack of climate research reports, science textbooks, first editions of "On the Origin of Species" -- and an effigy of Al Gore.

11 Weird creatures washing ashore, shrimping with diversions: This week's coastal news, Times Picayune, 9/24/17
http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2017/09/weird_creatures_washing_ashore.html#incart_river_index
Hurricanes Harvey and Irma pushed some unusual stuff ashore. A strange-looking eel was found on a Texas City, Texas, beach, and a historic-looking canoe was discovered in Cocoa, Fla. In Grand Isle, officials responded to what they first thought was another whale washing ashore. It was later identified as Risso's dolphin.

12 CDC: Mosquitoes carrying Zika, other deadly viruses could breed in 75 percent of the US, AJC, 9/22/17
http://www.ajc.com/news/cdc-mosquitoes-carrying-zika-other-deadly-viruses-could-breed-percent-the/2pqa4NuNBaHfhr5TL2p4rI/
According to a CDC study, up to 75 percent of the contiguous United States may provide suitable conditions for several species of disease-spreading mosquitoes. The recent study, published in the Public Journal of Entomology, found 71 percent of counties in the 48 contiguous states were suitable for the aegypti species and 75 percent could support albopictus species.

13 Exxon Mobil launches new methane emissions reduction program, Houston Chron, 9/25/17
http://www.chron.com/business/energy/article/Exxon-Mobil-launches-new-methane-emissions-12226095.php
Exxon Mobil is launching a new program focused on reducing methane emissions and leaks from its U.S. oil and gas production and pipelines. The project is focusing on installing environmentally efficient equipment and more leak-detection sensors throughout its onshore shale oil and gas operations in the U.S.

14 Pruitt plans to release schedule, Greenwire, 9/22/17
https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/09/22/stories/1060061477
U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is planning to release his public calendar, long sought by his critics on Capitol Hill and in the environmental movement. Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), ranking member on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, offered faint praise for the move by Pruitt. Earlier this year, the Democratic senator had called on the EPA chief to release his schedule on a monthly basis (E&E News PM, March 17).

15 State advances herbicide ban, setting up Monsanto fight, Greenwire, 9/22/17
https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/09/22/stories/1060061425
Arkansas officials have advanced a plan to ban farmers from using the controversial herbicide dicamba next summer, likely setting up a legal battle between the state and Monsanto Co., the maker of the chemical. The Arkansas State Plant Board yesterday brought the state one step closer to solidifying a rule that would ban the herbicide between April 16 and Oct. 31 next year.

16 After Harvey, experts worry about climate, dam safety, Greenwire, 9/22/17
https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/09/22/stories/1060061453
As the oceans warm and extreme weather events like Hurricane Harvey become more common on the Gulf Coast, climatologists are warning that Texas' dams might not be up to the test. Dams are generally designed with the most extreme scenario in mind, but weather experts say Harvey matched or exceeded the maximum amounts of rainfall that the state's dams are designed to hold off.

17 Federal decision on solar panel imports could cost Texas jobs, slow down installations
https://www.dallasnews.com/business/energy/2017/09/22/washingtons-solar-decision-cost-texas-jobs-help-manufacturing-elsewhere
The plummeting cost of solar electricity could soon be on its way up.
The U.S. International Trade Commission decided 4-0 Friday that imported solar cells and panels are threatening the domestic manufacturing industry, potentially setting the stage for President Donald Trump to set tariffs, a price floor or take some other action early next year.

18 State seeks more data before granting permit to hog farm in river's watershed, Ark. Democrat Gazette, 9/23/17
http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2017/sep/23/hog-farm-permit-decision-put-off-more-d-1/
The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality sent a letter this week to the owners of C&H Hog Farms asking for more documentation of their facility and plans as the department continues to evaluate the facility's permit application. The documents are already in the public record, Buffalo River Watershed Alliance board member Brian Thompson told the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission on Friday. Thompson called the request, which allows C&H 90 days to respond, a delay tactic and an "affront to public trust."

19 EPA clarifies earlier FEMA statement on Texas toxic sites, Star-telegram, 9/24/17
http://www.star-telegram.com/news/state/texas/article175186081.html
The Environmental Protection Agency said Sunday it has recovered 517 containers filled with unidentified, potentially hazardous material found floating in or washed up along Texas waterways after the devastating floods from Hurricane Harvey receded. The agency's statement sought to clarify an earlier media release saying the containers were recovered from highly contaminated toxic waste sites.

20 Lead & other metals found in the water in Enterprise, Louisiana, KNOE, 9/22/17
http://www.knoe.com/content/news/Lead-other-metals-found-in-the-water-in-Enterprise-LA-446651243.html
According to tests conducted by Virginia Tech, water in several homes in Enterprise, Louisiana tested positive for high levels of lead and other metals. The results come after a group took samples from 21 locations, 18 homes in the area last week.

21 Why has the 2017 hurricane season been so bad?, Times Picayune, 9/23/17
http://www.nola.com/hurricane/index.ssf/2017/09/why_has_the_2017_hurricane_sea.html
The 2017 hurricane season has been a full-on assault from Mother Nature. We are under siege, and our attackers have benign names like Harvey and Irma and Maria. But they are callous, powerful, indiscriminate, terrifying, destructive, merciless and relentless. Is Earth trying to eject us from the planet? Again and again and again the harshest of winds and hardest of rains has pounded on the most-defenseless territories we have. The Caribbean islands, hanging out in open sea. The Florida peninsula, jutting out into danger. The Texas coastline, low-lying and concrete-laden. Nearly a full month of back-to-back-to-back disasters.

22 Keep methane rule intact, Santa Fe New Mexican, 9/23/17
http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/my_view/keep-methane-rule-intact/article_457b9b5c-a9b9-531a-8805-32647b387f54.html
Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt: As a resident of New Mexico, I am extending to you a cheerful and hearty welcome to come and live and work in the middle of the Permian Basin or in the town of Farmington. Since you do not think there is a problem with leaking methane and want to delay the implementation of the Leak Detection and Repair part of the Methane Rule, you should come here and experience it, firsthand. Breathe deeply!

23 Farmers Claim Drift Problems Persist After Two States Banned Herbicide Dicamba, Foodtank, 9/24/17
https://foodtank.com/news/2017/09/herbicide-dicamba/
Researchers from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture found in August that every formulation of the herbicide dicamba they tested—including Monsanto's XtendiMax, BASF's Engenia, and DuPont's FeXapan—displayed volatility, or a tendency to blow away from the location it was originally sprayed. Some formulations remained volatile for up to 36 hours, even when proper application instructions were followed carefully.

24 After Harvey, 100+ debris dump sites pop up around town, ABC, 9/22/17
http://abc13.com/residents-frustrated-by-harvey-debris-management-sites/2444570/
Friends Howard Otis and Victor Hebert are taking a lot of pictures these days, but none of the images are pretty. Instead, they are pictures of debris truck after debris truck dropping off at the landfill across the street from their homes. "I do remember it being a landfill," said Otis, who has lived on and off in the neighborhood near Tanner Road for years. "But I never remember it being like this."

25 Parts of Port Arthur under boil water notice due to water main break and low pressure, KFDM, 9/22/17
http://kfdm.com/news/local/parts-of-port-arthur-under-boil-water-notice-due-to-water-main-break-and-low-pressure
The City of Port Arthur from Highway 73 to 4th Street between Highway 82 and Taft Ave is under an immediate boil water notice due to a water main break and subsequent loss of pressure, according to a city spokeswoman. These areas include the west side of Port Arthur, Sabine Pass, Pleasure Island, and eastward to Highway 366. The water main break happened near Savannah and 19th Street, but spokeswoman LaRisa Carpenter says it has since been fixed.

26 Forum to discuss proposed chemical plant in Killeen, KDH News, 9/23/17
http://kdhnews.com/news/local/forum-to-discuss-proposed-chemical-plant-in-killeen/article_d560e77e-a0d4-11e7-8171-87af714eab7f.html
The groundbreaking was private for MGC Pure Chemicals America's proposed plant at the Killeen Business Park. The public wasn't invited to the Aug. 30 event. Nor was media allowed. The Killeen Daily Herald reporter was told the media could ask questions at 11:15 a.m., after the groundbreaking, but nearly all participants were gone before 10:50 a.m. that day.

27 NMSU faculty, students use weather balloons to test ozone levels, NM State, 9/22/17

http://newscenter.nmsu.edu/Articles/view/12710/nmsu-faculty-students-use-weather-balloons-to-test-ozone-levels

Students at New Mexico State University are getting hands-on experience launching weather balloons to test ozone levels in the area. NMSU faculty and students are launching the weather balloons as part of a project with the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. (Photo by Dave DuBois) Man kneeling, woman standing holding weather balloon.

SCIENCE AND MEDICINE 3 HRS AGO

The fault that produced North Texas' largest quake could produce an even bigger one, study says

Anna Kuchment, Staff writer

The town that experienced a -magnitude earthquake in May — the strongest quake ever recorded in North Texas — sits on a fault with the potential to produce an event times larger, suggests a new study led by scientists at Southern Methodist University.

The report also concluded there was substantial evidence that the quake, near the Johnson County town of Venus, was triggered by the underground disposal of wastewater from oil and gas operations.

An aerial shot of a wastewater disposal site in Venus, Texas, in June □□□□. (Jae S. Lee/Staff Photographer)

The study was the latest to investigate North Texas' earthquake surge, which began in □□□□ and has generated more than □□□ tremors. The most recent widely felt event was a □.□-magnitude quake that struck near the border of Irving and Dallas on Aug. □□.

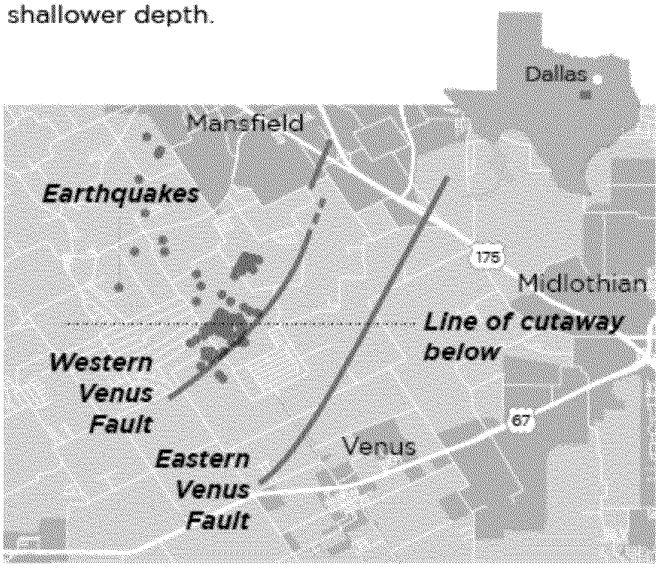
3.1-magnitude earthquake in northwest Dallas surprises residents, scientists

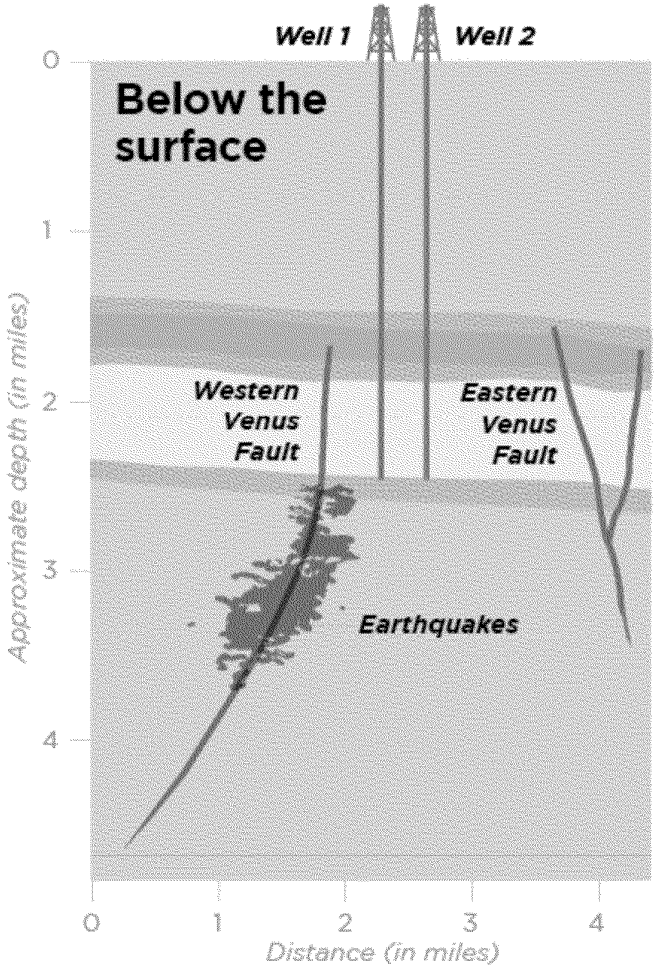
The U.S. Geological Survey, backed by peer-reviewed studies, has categorized the post-□□□□ earthquakes as human-induced. But the Railroad Commission of Texas, an agency that both regulates and promotes the oil and gas industry, has not accepted the USGS findings.

In response to the new study, published Sept. □ in the journal *Solid Earth*, the Railroad Commission said through a spokesperson only that its seismologist, Aaron Velasco, had not had the chance to thoroughly review the paper.

Fault lines

Scientists at SMU have identified two faults near Venus. One produced a 4-magnitude earthquake in May 2015 and holds the potential to produce stronger events. The scientists linked the quakes to wastewater wells in the area. Since 2015, Well 1 has stopped injecting and Well 2 was plugged to a shallower depth.





SOURCE: American Geophysical Union Michael Hogue/Staff Artist

SOURCE: American Geophysical Union Michael Hogue/Staff Artist

The team of seismologists identified two previously unpublished faults near Venus and Mansfield, about □□ miles southwest of Dallas. The researchers found that the fault responsible for the □□□□ quake is at least □ miles long and holds the potential to produce a □-magnitude or greater earthquake if the fault ruptured along its full length.

This is not meant to be taken as, 'a magnitude □ will happen on this fault,' said SMU's Heather DeShon, a who led the new study. Until now, the fault has ruptured only in smaller sections, and it may never produce a bigger event, she said.

Heather DeShon in □□□□ (Thao Nguyen/Special Contributor)

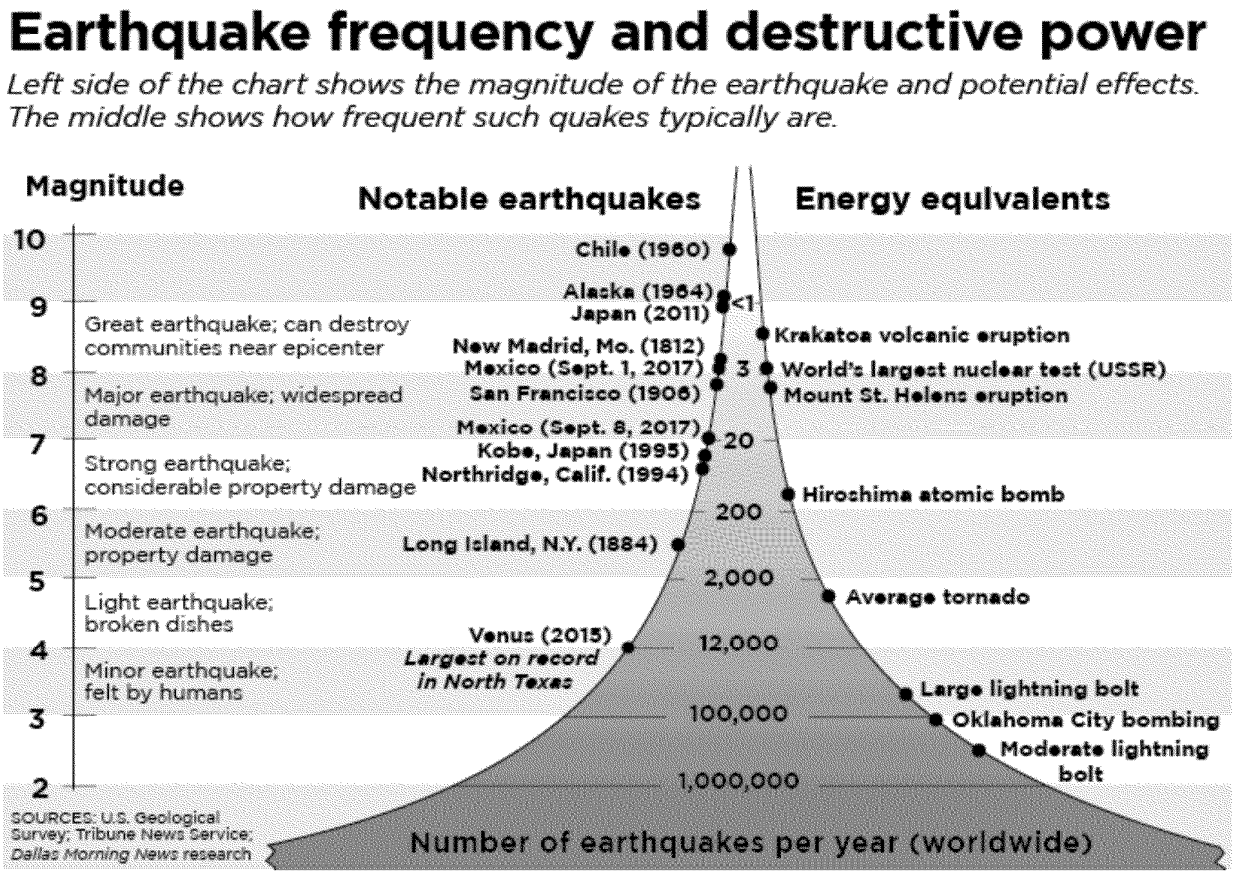
Quakes of that size are considered moderate and don't typically cause serious property damage. But a □-magnitude earthquake that struck Cushing, Okla. in November caused several brick buildings, which are especially vulnerable to earthquake damage, to be condemned. At least one of those buildings later collapsed, and others were torn down, said Jacob Walter, Oklahoma's state seismologist who contributed to the paper while he was at the University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Geophysics.

Because earthquakes in North Texas and Oklahoma are shallower than typical natural quakes, they can be felt more strongly near the epicenter.

DeShon, Walter and their colleagues also found that the □-magnitude event marked the culmination of a series of increasingly large earthquakes along the same fault that began a decade ago, shortly after companies began disposing wastewater in northeast Johnson County. Until May □□□□, earthquake magnitudes increased in step with injection volumes.

To DeShon, that means turning off individual wells is not likely to affect earthquake sizes or rates.

From a mitigation standpoint, you need to start thinking in terms of the cumulative history of injection in regions, she said.



Johnson County Emergency Management Director Jamie Moore said that the county had factored earthquakes into its plans but that tornadoes and floods took priority because of limited resources.

We focus on what are the most likely scenarios, not necessarily the most damaging ones, he said.

He is concerned about the possibility of an earthquake shifting gas pipelines and causing a leak. But, because Johnson County is home to a dense network of wells and pipelines, first responders are prepared for those situations, he said.

Moore suggested that the earthquakes are more of a political issue than one of emergency management. It's a completely separate issue whether we as a society want to live with minor earthquakes that are very odd and certainly very noticeable, he said.

The □-magnitude earthquake that shook Venus on May □, □□□□, generated a flood of phone calls to Moore's office but only one report of relatively minor damage: a block holding up a mobile home cracked.

A □-magnitude earthquake would be □□ times bigger than a magnitude □ and would release □□ times more energy.

The new study suggests that pressure from wastewater injections in Johnson County triggered the May □□□□ □-magnitude earthquake. Energy companies rely on wastewater wells to dispose of fluid left over from hydraulic fracturing and other oil and gas production techniques. Johnson County, which sits atop the gas-rich Barnett Shale, is one of the densest regions in the U.S. for wastewater disposal wells, with more than five for every □ square miles. Disposal and gas production wells dot the landscape, sometimes hidden behind trees but often rising amid new housing developments and alongside roads.

To extract gas, companies force millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals down a well to fracture the shale. As the gas travels from the rock back up the well, fracking fluid and natural groundwater travel up with it. Companies then separate the oil and gas from the wastewater, then truck the wastewater to a disposal well that injects the fluid deep underground, where it is less likely to contaminate soil and drinking water.

Studies going back to the □□□□s have shown that pressure from wastewater injections can cause faults to slip and produce earthquakes. More recently, scientists have learned that only a small percentage of faults — those oriented in just the right direction relative to natural stresses in the earth — are likely to slip in such cases.

Scientists offer possible explanation for how oil and gas activity may have triggered Dallas earthquakes

That rare set of circumstances converged in Venus on May □, □□□□. In response, the Railroad Commission sent inspectors to the area to check wells and pipelines for damage and asked operators of the five wells closest to the epicenter to temporarily shut down and perform pressure tests. The commission then issued a statement saying there was no conclusive evidence tying the wells to the earthquake.

SMU scientists analyzed data from those tests and found that pressures around the wells were elevated significantly enough to trigger an earthquake. Despite publicly playing down links between wastewater injection and the earthquake, the Railroad Commission privately asked one of the well operators, Metro Saltwater Disposal, to plug back its well to a shallower depth. Another operator, EOG Resources, stopped injecting into one of its wells after May □□□□, according to public data available on the Railroad Commission website. It has since plugged that well and sold its natural gas assets in Johnson County, according to a company spokesperson.

In November, Railroad Commissioner Ryan Sitton came close to publicly accepting the wastewater disposal-earthquake link. He said the connection was especially plausible in Johnson County. I have seen credible data and science from operators that lead me to believe that Johnson County has elevated risks of seismicity related to disposal activities, and therefore warrants additional investigation, he said in a prepared statement.

That investigation, he suggested, would come from UT-Austin's Bureau of Economic Geology, which operates TexNet, Texas's new state-funded seismic network, and hosts the industry-sponsored Center for Integrated Seismicity Research, or CISR.

Peter Hennings, principal investigator of CISR, called the new study a valuable contribution for understanding earthquakes in Johnson County and said the link between the earthquake and the wells was reasonable but incomplete pending more definitive studies. His group is also investigating faults in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and their potential to produce earthquakes and will begin releasing those findings in December.

He added that the reduction in wastewater volumes in Johnson County since □□□□ suggests that a stronger earthquake would be less likely now but cannot be ruled out. Since Oklahoma began reducing its wastewater injections, it has seen several larger quakes, even as its overall earthquake rate has decreased.

For that reason, wrote DeShon and her colleagues, the May , earthquake may be neither the final nor the largest earthquake in this sequence."

Read more: Why Texas won't admit fracking wastewater is causing earthquakes

Earthquakes: North Texas responds to a surge of tremors

VIEW COMMENTS

SCIENCE AND MEDICINE ENERGY

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HYPERALLERGIC

ARTICLES

Navajo Nation Artists Respond to the Threat of Uranium Radiation

Nuclear contamination from abandoned uranium mines is rampant across the Navajo Nation, and a community of artists is raising awareness through a street art project and gallery exhibition.

Emily Pier | 4 days ago

"Radioactive Pollution Kills. It's Time To Clean Up The Mines." (2016) by Icy & Sot for *The Painted Desert* project in Gray Mountain, A.Z. (all photos by Emily Pier for Hyperallergic unless otherwise noted)

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A large-scale human rights violation is occurring in the United States, and there is a dearth of news coverage on the issue. Nuclear contamination from abandoned uranium mines is rampant across the Navajo Nation's 27,000 square miles of land, throughout Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. This situation has left thousands of people without access to safe drinking water, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In response, a community of artists is raising awareness about the problem through a street art project and a gallery exhibition.

The Southwest has a legacy of uranium mining that has contaminated water, destroyed land, killed people and animals, and forced the government to pay billions in reparations. Abandoned mines and nuclear waste litter the area's Indian

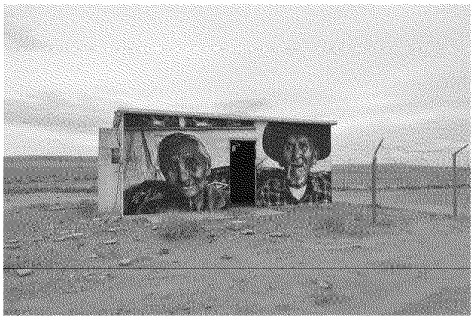
reservation, yet only a fraction of the contaminated sites have proper warning signs. Fortunately, artists are using murals and billboards to alert the public to these hazards.

Graèca Mazatl and Stinkèsh (left hand side of the structure); Tom Tomahawk Greyeyes and Nadine Narindrankura (right hand side); Greyeyes' mural serves as a fact sheet of coal mining in Navajo Nation and the associated environmental and health impacts. Both collaborations are for *The Painted Desert* project in Shonto, A.Z.

The Painted Desert Project is a street art collaboration that warns people of radioactive pollution in the area of the Navajo Nation, and is curated by Dr. Chip "Jetsonorama" Thomas. The artist (who has adopted the nickname "Jetsonorama") is also a medical doctor who lives on the Indian reservation and treats people who have developed cancer and other health complications as a result of radioactive exposure. Jetsonorama's art serves as a means of educating people about environmental injustices that deeply açect the Navajo Nation. He hopes that his artwork will encourage people to petition Congress and the federal government to clean up old mines and contaminated land and water.

As part of *The Painted Desert Project,* inside of a hut he had wheat-pasted, Jetsonorama hung a sign stating:

> Welcome to #ThePaintedDesertProject. The photo…speaks to the land around this old pump house. Much of the land is contaminated with uranium. There's >500 uncapped uranium mines on the rez. They açect this land, the water, animals + people. (Don't linger in this room + don't kick up dust.)



Wheat-pasted pump house on a radioactive wasteland by Jetsonorama for The Painted Desert Project in Cameron, A.Z.

An installation piece by Icy & Sot called "The Killing Wind" (2016) rests on the éoor of the pump house. The plastic fan, painted to resemble the warning symbol for nuclear radiation, serves as a reminder of the wind's ability to spread nuclear particles hundreds of miles . Radioactive dust can be especially problematic when contaminants blow into nearby

streams or other water sources. Although Jetsonorama has gained international exposure through his collaborations with world renowned artists, such as Icy and Sot, this publicity has yet to translate into the passing of meaningful legislation or tangible progress with respect to cleaning up the mines.

"The Killing Wind" (2016) by Icy & Sot for The Painted Desert Project in Cameron, A.Z.

To further his eçorts to catalyze change, Jetsonorama brought his work from the open desert to an indoor gallery with his participation in *Hope + Trauma in a Poisoned Land*, an art exhibition running through October 28, 2017 at the Coconino Center for the Arts in Flagstaç, Arizona. The show raises awareness about uranium mining and its aftermath and promotes healing through artistic expression. It features the work of 20 local artists, including Jetsonorama, who in the previous year had attended a four-day educational seminar about uranium and contamination on Native American soil, in which Navajo community members, scientists, mental health professionals, and health care experts had educated the participants on the impacts of uranium mining. Jetsonorama used the information he had learned from the seminar in his work pertaining to abandoned uranium mines in the Navajo Nation.

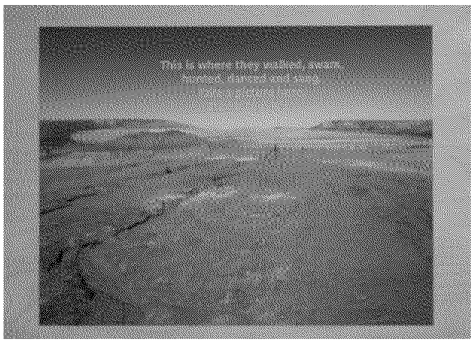
Jetsonorama's wall mural in Phoenix, A.Z. promoting Hope + Trauma in A Poisoned Land: The Impact of Uranium Mining on Navajo Lands at Coconino Center for the Arts in Flagstaç, A.Z.

Jetsonorama's major installation piece entitled, "Atomic (r)Age" (2017) features a newspaper article about hidden casualties of the Atomic Age printed on translucent fabric. The man pictured in the 1967 article from *The Washington Post* featured in "Atomic r(Age)" is the father of Jetsonorama's colleague who died from cancer related to uranium mining. As described on Jetsonorama's website: "the see-through material … references the ephemeral, fragile and transient nature of our life experience at a time when the new Secretary of Energy seeks to 'make nuclear cool again' in a new atomic age."

The massive size of this piece — eight feet by eight feet — reéects the monumental nature of the issue. The piece also shares the story of one victim of uranium mining and his family, thereby simultaneously personalizing the enormous problem.

Jetsonorama's installation ""Atomic r(Age)" (2017) (photo courtesy Jetsonorama)

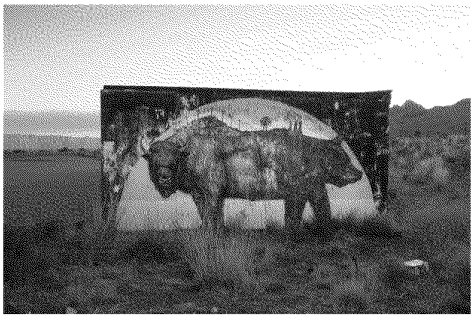
Uranium, an element that naturally exists beneath the earth's surface, is used for nuclear energy. It supplies 11% of the world's electricity and is used for weapons and atomic bombs. During the Cold War, the development of nuclear weaponry increased demand for radioactive ores in the United States. From 1944 through 1986, 30 million tons of uranium was excavated from the Navajo Nation by independent energy companies operating under U.S. government contracts to make nuclear weapons and fuel. By 1970, the Atomic Energy Commission had ample reserves and stopped buying uranium. Domestic uranium mining ceased in the mid 1980's due to plentiful reserves, foreign competition, nuclear fears, and federal regulations. Energy companies abandoned the mines without cleaning them up. At the time, Navajo miners and residents were not informed of the health or environmental ramiècations of uranium mining.


Helen Padilla's poem for *Hope + Trauma in A Poisoned Land* (photo courtesy Helen Padilla)

Many Native Americans died from lung cancer as a result of working in unventilated mines. Kidney failure and various types of cancer also killed many who merely lived nearby. *Hope + Trauma* shares the stories of these people who live with the consequences of uranium mining and whose land, water, animals, and surroundings have been polluted. Performance, installations,

photographs, paintings, and poems reveal the impact that 42 years of uranium exploitation has had on the community.

Abandoned mines continue to emit dangerous levels of radiation. In 2014, the federal government allocated $1 billion to clean up 50 of the 521 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation. Some progress has been made, but Trump's EPA budget cuts are interfering. Furthermore, contamination can worsen if new mining is allowed. Trump has threatened to reverse Obama's 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining near the Grand Canyon and to reconègure the national monuments boundaries set by the former president, and thus remove current restrictions on land use. These destructive environmental policies would be a death sentence to many.



"Buçalo Bear" by Alexis Diaz for The Painted Desert Project in Bitter Springs, A.Z.

The perilous state of conservation underscores the importance of the eçorts of the Navajo Nation's art community to raise awareness. It is the federal government's responsibility to see that the contamination is fully remediated, but much work remains to be done. Jetsonorama has done a wonderful job of working with other artists to raise awareness and encourage people to contact government oê cials to address the environmental injustices in the Navajo Nation. Until the government takes further action to protect the public from dangerous radioactive exposure, the best hope of reform comes from grassroots eçorts such as the ones being pursued by Navajo Nation artists.

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(/)

Posted September 22, 2017 11:58 pm

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS (/associated-press-1)

Barrier put in mine that sent toxic water into 3 states

DENVER — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is installing a barrier and valve inside an inactive Colorado mine to prevent another surge of wastewater like a 2015 blowout that contaminated rivers in three states.

The 12-inch valve will regulate wastewater pouring from the Gold King Mine in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado, where the EPA inadvertently triggered a wastewater spill while excavating at the mine entrance in August 2015.

That spill released 3 million gallons of wastewater containing aluminum, iron and other heavy metals and instantly became a major embarrassment for the EPA.

Rivers in Colorado, New Mexico and Utah were tainted. Irrigators, water utilities and rafting companies temporarily stopped using the Animas and San Juan rivers. The EPA says water quality quickly returned to pre-spill levels.

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The valve will be mounted in a steel-and concrete barrier about 70 feet inside the mine. The barrier will have water-tight access doors so workers and equipment can get deeper into the mine for cleanup and investigation.

The EPA is also drilling a 170-foot horizontal well into another part of the Gold King to drain any water building up there. That water would be routed through a temporary treatment plant below the mine where wastewater draining from the main entrance is cleaned up.

The EPA said it can control the ow of wastewater from the new drain to avoid another blowout.

The documents did not say say how much the work will cost and the EPA did not immediately respond to emails and a phone call Wednesday seeking comment.

The work is expected to be completed next month.

Peter Butler, a leader of the volunteer Animas River Stakeholders Group, which works to improve water quality in the area, said he agreed with the EPA's decision to install the barrier and drainage well.

"It's probably a good idea," he said. "They are showing an abundance of caution."

Wastewater has owed from the Gold King for years, and since the 2015 blowout, it has poured out at a rate of about 500 gallons a minute.

Mine waste ows are unpredictable In the San Juan Mountains, where underground water ows through an interconnected warren of mine tunnels and natural faults.

Precautions such as the barrier, valve and horizontal drain will make it safer for investigators to enter the mines and try to gure out the water ows, Butler said.

The Gold King and dozens of other mining-related sites in the region were designated a Superfund district in 2016.

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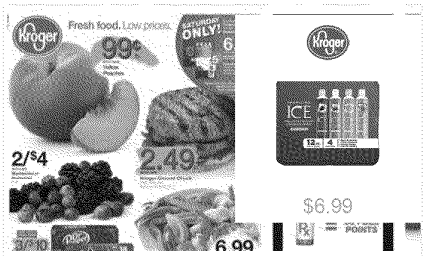

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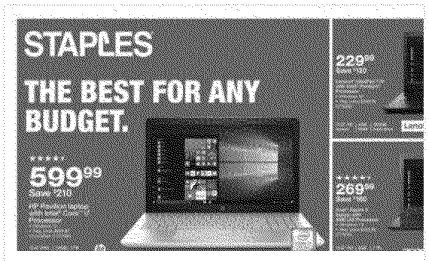

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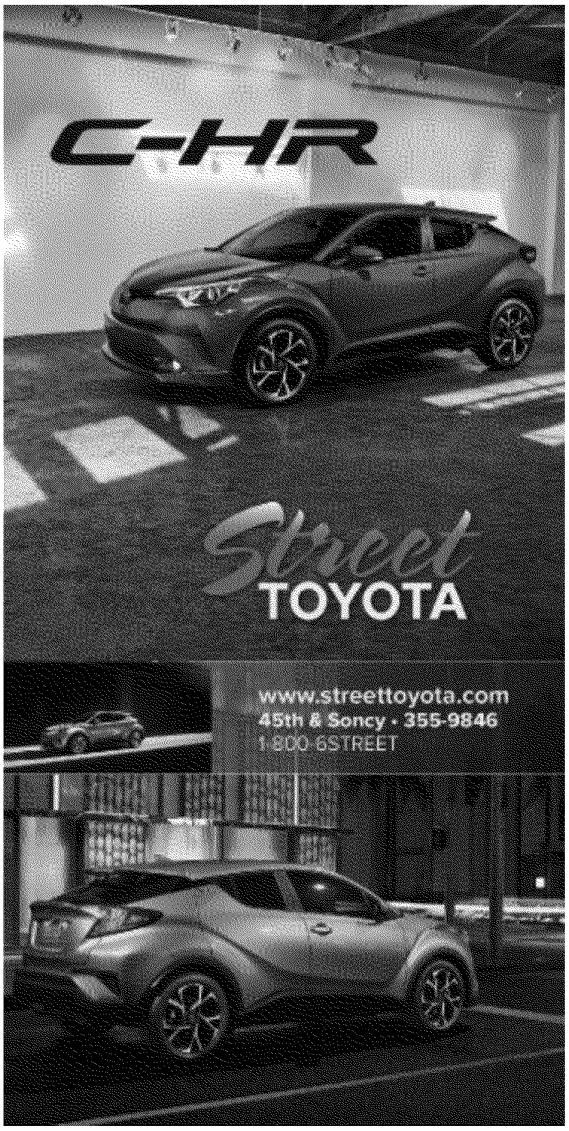

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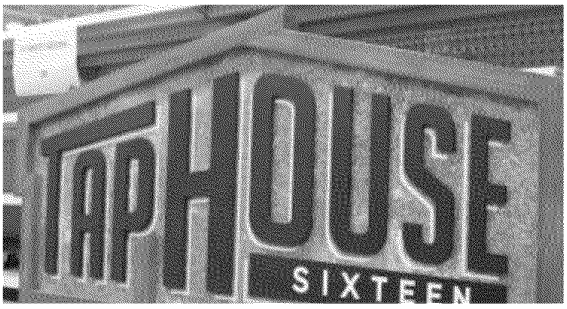

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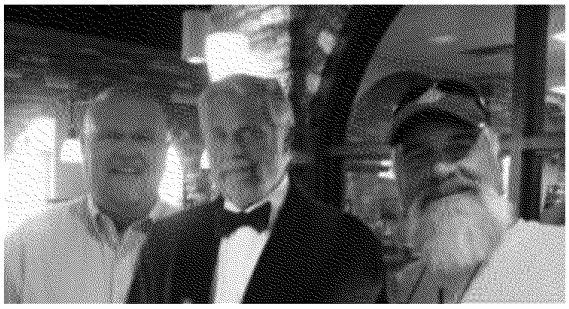

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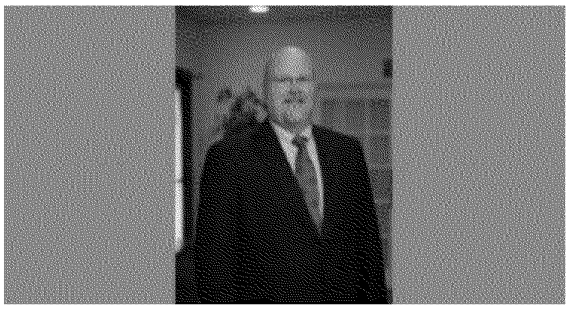

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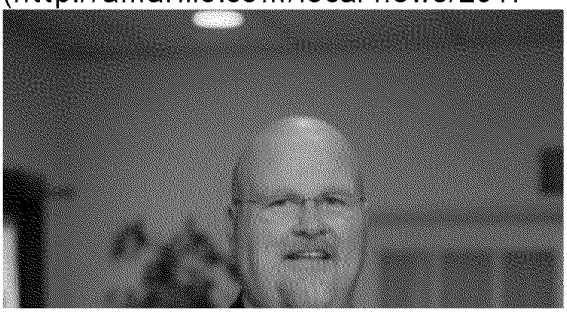

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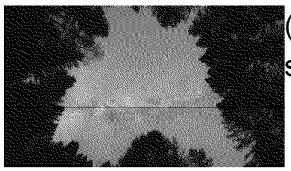

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Arkansas De×es Monsanto, Moves To Ban Rogue Weedkiller

By DAN CHARLES (/PEOPLE/DAN-CHARLES) · SEP 22, 2017

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David Wildy, a prominent Arkansas farmer, in a ×eld of soybeans that were damaged by dicamba. He says that "farmers need this technology. But right is right and wrong is wrong. And when you let a technology, a pesticide or whatever, get on your neighbor, it's not right. We can't do that."

DAN CHARLES/NPR

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Originally published on September 23, 2017 12:33 pm

Arkansas is on the verge of banning the use, during the growing season, of a Monsanto-backed weedkiller that has been blamed for damaging millions of acres of crops in neighboring farms this year.

The weedkiller is called dicamba. It can be sprayed on soybeans and cotton that have been genetically modi×ed to tolerate it. But not all farmers plant those new seeds. And across the Midwest, farmers that don't use the herbicide are blaming their dicamba-spraying neighbors for widespread damage to their crops —and increasingly, to wild vegetation.

The issue has driven a wedge through farming communities in the Midwest, straining friendships and turning neighbors into adversaries.

Monsanto turned to dicamba because many weeds have evolved resistance to the company's earlier weed-killing weapon of choice, glyphosate, also known as Roundup. Increasingly, Roundup no longer gets rid of farmers' most troublesome weeds.

Dicamba is an old herbicide, but it's now being used much more widely, in combination with a new generation of genetically modi×ed, dicamba-tolerant crops. It's also being widely used, for the ×rst time, in the heat of summer, which makes the herbicide more prone to "volatilizing" — turning into a vapor and drifting in unpredictable directions.

This was the ×rst year that farmers were allowed to spray it on soybean and cotton ×elds. (Some farmers did use dicamba illegally (http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/08/01/487809643/crime-in-the-×elds-how-monsanto-and-scofØaw-farmers-hurt-soybeans-in-arkansas) last year, provoking disputes between farmers that in one case, led to murder (http://www.npr.org/2017/06/14/532879755/a-pesticide-a-pigweed-and-a-farmers-murder).) Many farmers embraced the new tool. But it quickly turned controversial: Farmers couldn't seem to keep dicamba con×ned to their own ×elds.

The problem was worst in Arkansas, where almost 1,000 farmers ×led formal complaints of damage caused by drifting dicamba. But the rogue weedkiller has hit ×elds across soybean-growing areas from Mississippi to Minnesota.

According to estimates (https://ipm.missouri.edu/IPCM/2017/8/Update-on-Dicamba-related-Injury-Investigations-and-Estimates-of-Injured-Soybean-Acreage/) compiled by weed scientist Kevin Bradley at the University of Missouri, at least 3 million acres of crops have seen some injury. Most are soybeans that aren't resistant to dicamba, but vegetable crops like watermelons, fruit trees and wild vegetation have been injured as well. The dicamba vapors didn't typically kill the plants but left behind curled leaves and sometimes stunted plants.

"There is no precedent for what we've seen this year," says Bob Scott (https://personnel-directory.uaex.edu/People/uaex905809/Robert-Scott), a weed specialist with the University of Arkansas.

The Arkansas State Plant Board now has taken the lead in cracking down on the problem. On Thursday, it voted unanimously to ban the use of dicamba on the state's crops from mid-April until November. This amounts to a ban on the use of dicamba in combination with Monsanto's genetically engineered crops. It's not a ×nal decision: The governor and a group of legislative leaders have to sign off on the Plant Board's regulatory decisions, but they usually do so. That won't happen, however, until after a public hearing set for Nov. 8.

The board also approved a steep increase in ×nes — up to $25,000 — for farmers who use dicamba and similar herbicides illegally.

Monsanto insists that its version of dicamba, which the company has mixed with an additive that's supposed to make it less volatile, does not drift from the ×elds where it is sprayed if farmers use it correctly. The company sent a delegation of ×ve people, including Ty Vaughn, a top executive, to this week's meeting of the Plant Board. They passed out binders and thumb drives ×lled with data from the company's own tests — tests that convinced the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to approve the chemical on crops.

Vaughn told the board that most of the damage from dicamba comes from farmers not understanding or following the rules for using it properly. "There's going to be a learning curve," he said. "It behooves all of us to continue to learn, and work toward solutions. I hope that's the goal of everybody in the conversation."

For Monsanto, a lot of money is at stake — potentially hundreds of millions of dollars. Nationwide, Monsanto sold enough dicamba-tolerant soybeans to cover 20 million acres this year, and the company expects that number to rise.

But Monsanto may have underestimated the backlash against dicamba in Arkansas. The Plant Board was convinced by ×eld experiments carried out this summer by researchers at the University of Arkansas and other universities. Those tests showed that dicamba — even new formulations created by Monsanto and another chemical company, BASF — does vaporize and spread across the landscape.

David Wildy, a prominent farmer in Manila, Ark., who served on a state-appointed task force that recommended the ban on dicamba use on crops, says that "farmers need this technology. But right is right and wrong is wrong. And when you let a technology, a pesticide or whatever, get on your neighbor, it's not right. We can't do that."

After Thursday's vote, Monsanto's Vaughn sounded de×ant, accusing the Plant Board of ignoring scienti×c data. "The most troubling thing is, we did come in good faith to try and provide more information — the binders and the Øash drives — and clearly they did not even consider that information before they made their decision," he said. He said that the company was "keeping all options open" in deciding how to respond. Monsanto has previously threatened to go to court if Arkansas went ahead with a dicamba ban.

In recent weeks, others have also started reporting damage from dicamba. These include gardeners, beekeepers and wildlife advocates.

The most impassioned speaker at this week's meeting of the Plant Board, in fact, was Richard Coy, who manages 13,000 honeybee hives in Arkansas, Missouri and Mississippi. Coy reported that in areas where farmers were spraying dicamba on their crops, honey production in his hives fell by 30 to 50 percent, apparently because dicamba stopped wild vegetation from blooming, thus depriving bees of sustenance.

"Yes, it's just weeds and vines," Coy told the board. "But those weeds and vines are there for a reason. This is about the environment. If we don't get a handle on it, our natural environment will not be the same."

Other states, and the EPA, are considering new restrictions on dicamba use. But so far, none have come up with speci×c proposals.

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DAVID GREENE, HOST:

OK. When you hear scandal of the year, you're probably not thinking agriculture. But millions of acres of crops have been damaged by a rogue weed killer that drifted over from nearby ×elds. One of the companies that's backing the weed killer is Monsanto. And the state of Arkansas is close to banning the use of this weed killer. NPR's Dan Charles is with us. Hey there, Dan.

DAN CHARLES, BYLINE: Hi, David.

GREENE: OK. So ×rst of all, catch us up on the news. There was an important vote about all this in Arkansas last night.

CHARLES: Right. So a state - the state plant board, which is a committee of private citizens connected to agriculture with authority to regulate pesticides - they voted yesterday to ban the use of this particular herbicide called dicamba during the summer time - basically, from mid-April through November - because they say, we can't control this herbicide. It drifts into neighboring ×elds.

GREENE: OK. You've got to step back for me now for people who haven't followed this at all and explain what this pesticide is and how all these crops have been getting damaged and how big a deal this is.

CHARLES: Right. This is kind of a case where a new technology gets rolled out before, apparently, people fully understand what it's - how it's going to behave. It's a new version of a - you know, an approach to wiping out weeds that Monsanto pioneered 20 years ago, where you genetically modify crops so they can tolerate, you know, a herbicide, a weed killer. Makes it easier for farmers to spray the ×elds, kill the weeds. And their crops are safe. They did this ×rst with Roundup, known as glyphosate. Roundup doesn't work as well because a lot of weeds have evolved resistance to it. So there's a new one. It's called dicamba. It's an old herbicide. But dicamba has this problem people knew about. It tends to drift, you know, from the place you sprayed it into neighboring ×elds.

GREENE: Neighboring ×elds where crops are not immune to it.

CHARLES: Exactly - where crops are sensitive to this. And this isn't just - you know, when they started spraying this year, the complaints rolled in. I mean, it was most severe in Arkansas. But all across the Midwest, there are, you know, a couple of thousand complaints. Three million acres, apparently, have been damaged - mostly soybeans but also watermelon farms, vineyards, fruit trees, lots of different crops.

GREENE: So this must have farmers, I mean, furious.

CHARLES: Absolutely. So I've actually been down here in Arkansas for the past week, talking to farmers. And, you know, they talk about how it's kind of divided communities. It's ruined friendships. It's, you know - it turned acquaintances into adversaries. And the thing that makes people, you know, really angry, it seems like, is they're - they've had this - they know what herbicide drift looks like. And they've dealt with it before. But in this case, it's drifting, and they sometimes don't even know where it comes from. And so it's just - you know, they're pretty upset.

GREENE: Well - and is Arkansas alone in trying to stop this now, or are there other states that might follow suit?

CHARLES: It's alone right now. They've had this process - well, because it's most severe here. And they've come to this conclusion that, you know, they can't control this herbicide. And so they're just going to ban it for the summer. It's really not clear what other states are going to do. It's not clear what the federal EPA is going to do. Monsanto, for its part, says this is not a problem if farmers use it correctly. We just train farmers, and the problems will go away.

GREENE: NPR's Dan Charles talking to us from Forrest City, Ark. Dan, thanks.

CHARLES: Thank you.

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EPA Clari×es FEMA Statement On Texas Toxic Sites

September 24, 2017 9:26 PM

Filed Under: EPA, FEMA, Superfund sites, Texas, toxic sites

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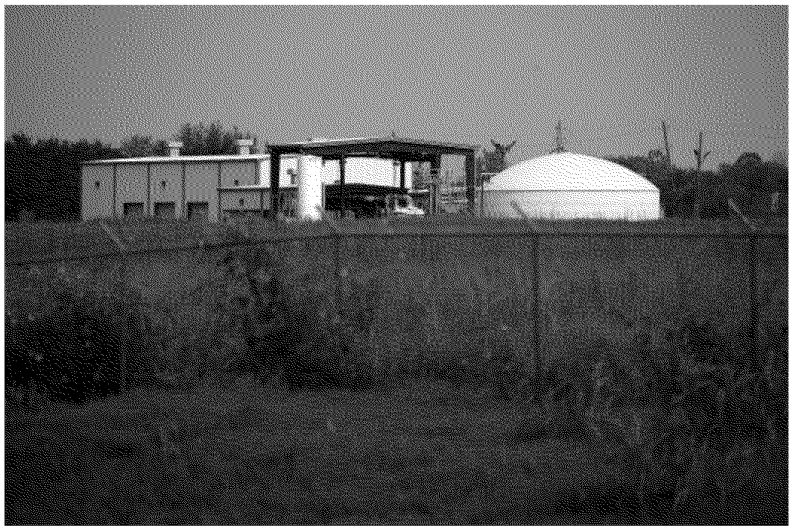
WASHINGTON (AP)—The Environmental Protection Agency said Sunday it has recovered 517 containers ×lled with unidenti×ed, potentially hazardous material found Øoating in or washed up along Texas waterways after the devastating Øoods from Hurricane Harvey receded.

The agency's statement sought to clarify an earlier media release saying the containers were recovered from highly contaminated toxic waste sites.

The EPA said that statement issued Friday night by the Federal Emergency Management Agency created confusion by conØating two separate issues.



FRIENDSWOOD, TX – SEPTEMBER 04: A view of a building on the Brio Superfund site on September 4, 2017 in Friendswood, Texas. 13 of the 41 Superfund sites in Texas remain Øooded following Hurricane Harvey but it is unclear if chemicals and pollutants from the the facilities were able to escape in Øoodwaters. Over a week after Hurricane Harvey hit Southern Texas, residents are beginning the long process of recovering from the storm. (Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

ADVERTISING

The FEMA media release summarizing the federal response Harvey's historic Øoods said EPA had "conducted assessments of 43 Superfund sites and recovered 517 containers of unidenti×ed, potentially hazardous material."

The Associated Press reported about the statement Saturday afternoon, after EPA's press of×ce did not responded to questions sent by email to top staffers the night before.

"EPA and our response partners have been collecting containers orphaned after the hurricane," David Gray, a spokesman for EPA's regional headquarters in Texas, said in an email to AP on Sunday. "These are not related to Superfund clean ups."

Gray did not respond to questions about why he and other EPA press staff had not sought to clarify the issue for more than 44 hours. Also left unanswered are questions about the results of EPA's assessments at two highly contaminated Houston-area Superfund sites Øooded by Harvey's record shattering rains.

EPA has not responded to more than a dozen calls and emails from AP over the last two weeks.

AP reported Sept. 18 that a government hotline had received calls about three separate spills at the U.S. Oil Recovery Superfund site, a former petroleum waste processing plant outside Houston contaminated with a dangerous brew of cancer-causing chemicals.

Records obtained by the AP showed workers at the site reported spills of unknown materials in unknown amounts affecting nearby Vince Bayou. Local pollution control of×cials photographed three large tanks that had been used to store potentially hazardous waste completely underwater on Aug. 29.

EPA has still not disclosed the spills or what was in the tanks before they Øooded. The agency says its staff visited the site the following week and saw no visual evidence of contaminants in the bayou.

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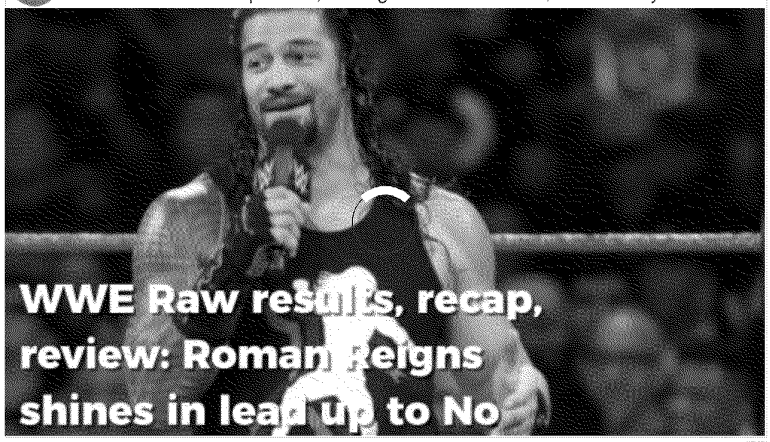

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NEWS ENVIRONMENT

Colorado landfills are illegally burying low-level radioactive waste from oil and gas industry, Denver Post learns

Colorado health officials are trying to stop the practice and make new rules for low-level radioactive waste

Photo provided by Pawnee Waste LLC

Construction crews are building a new landfill near Grover to handle oil and gas industry waste, including low-level radioactive waste. They will use clay and plastic liners to protect land and groundwater.

By BRUCE FINLEY | bfinley@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

PUBLISHED: September 22, 2017 at 6:30 am | UPDATED: September 25, 2017 at 1:54 am

Colorado land lls have been illegally burying low-level radioactive waste from the oil and gas industry that they are not approved to handle, state health of cials revealed this week.

State health regulators, con rming at a meeting with local governments the disposal of unknown amounts at ordinary land lls, are trying to prohibit the practice and buttress their oversight. Colorado's booming oil and gas industry produces millions of tons of waste, some of it radioactive, and both waste producers and land ll operators are obligated to handle it properly.

"There is some of it that is just going to solid waste land lls. … It is probably, mostly, staying in state," Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment hazardous materials and waste management director Gary Baughman said at the meeting Wednesday.

CDPHE regulators said they don't know of any "imminent" threat to public health, noting that land ll operators must monitor water that leaches through waste.

But state of cials asked cities and counties to help stop improper disposal of the industry's so-called technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive materials (TENORM)—sludge from lter bags, pipelines and storage tanks, and possibly drill cuttings. Radioactive materials can cause cancer.

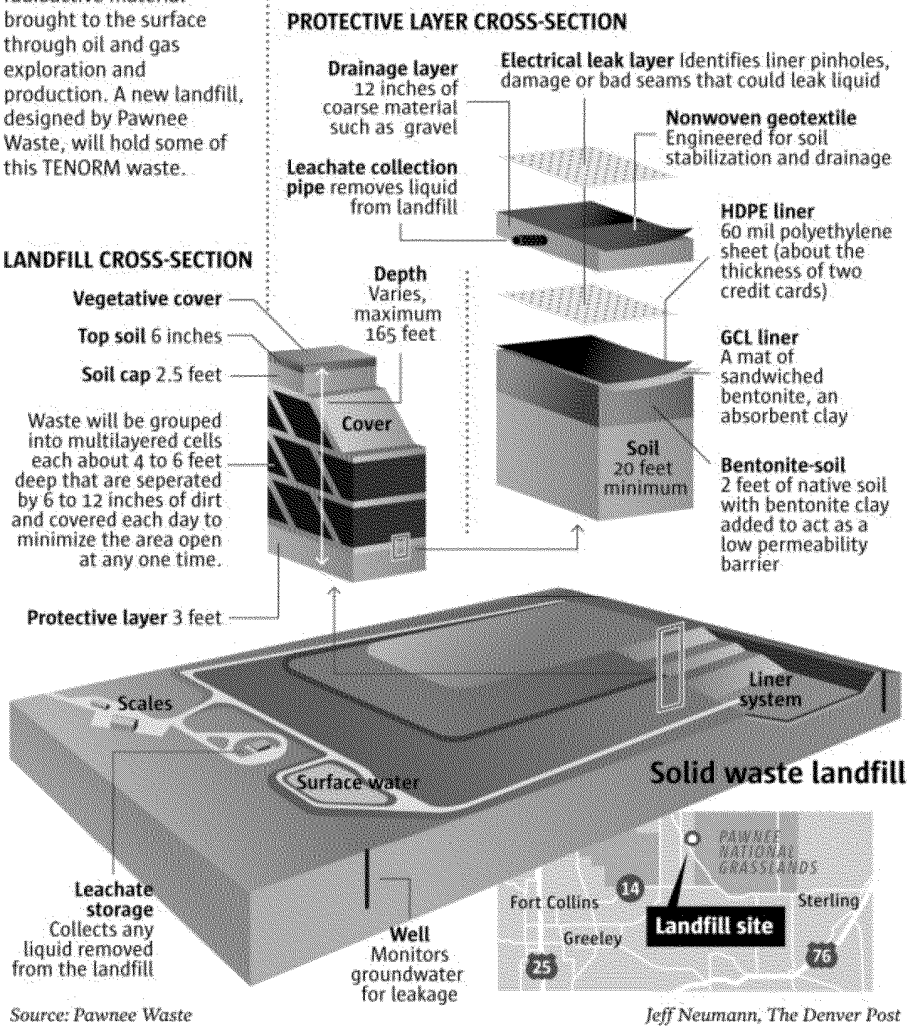
Land lls authorized to accept radioactive materials must use liners and other protective barriers to protect land and water. All land ll operators must ask waste haulers to characterize their loads, especially if they could hurt public health and the environment.

Colorado seeks safe burial for low-level radioactive waste

The oil and gas industry generates waste laced with radioactive elements found in the environment, such as uranium, thorium and potassium, as well as their decay products, including radium and radon. This waste, called TENORM, contains radioactive material brought to the surface through oil and gas exploration and production. A new landfill, designed by Pawnee Waste, will hold some of this TENORM waste.

Some oil and gas TENORM comes from:

- Tank bottoms
- Waste pipeline and flowline sections
- Natural gas scrubbers, compressors, reflux pumps, control valves and product lines
- Horizontal drill cuttings
- Residual materials dislodged during cleaning and maintenance on crude oil and natural gas pipelines
- Liquid natural gas storage tanks



Source: Pawnee Waste *Jeff Neumann, The Denver Post*

CDPHE environment programs director Martha Rudolph said lawmakers must help by xing a glitch in state laws. A solid waste statute requires CDPHE to prohibit disposal of radioactive waste at land lls not designed and designated to handle it safely. CDPHE also is charged with regulating radioactive materials. But a provision in the radioactive materials statute says CDPHE cannot regulate disposal of those materials.

Lawmakers should give clarity by removing that last provision, Rudolph said, and CDPHE then would create a new rule for putting low-level radioactive waste in land lls a er hearing from companies and Colorado residents.

Today, only two land lls are approved to accept low-level radioactive waste routinely. And a new, specialized Pawnee Waste facility east of Fort Collins is being built, with 350,000 cubic yards of dirt excavated so far, to dispose of up to 15 million tons of the oil and gas industry's radioactive waste. Pawnee of cials said they'll open it in November and that plastic liners, clay barriers and electronic leak-detection sensors will protect land and groundwater.

Oil and gas companies in Colorado, extracting fossil fuels from more than 55,000 wells, generate roughly 500,000 tons of solid waste per year, including low-level radioactive waste.

"It is in the industry's best interest to mitigate long-term risks. And it is in the public's best interest. This radiation lasts for a long time," Pawnee project manager Jane Witheridge said. "If we don't treat it differently from municipal solid waste, we would not be serving either the industry or the environment as it should be in Colorado. This is being done in North Dakota. It is being done in Texas."

The Pawnee land ll "will be a great place to send" radioactive waste "but it is probably not enough" to handle all the waste the industry is likely to produce in the future, said Joe Schieffelin, CDPHE's solid waste program manager. "That's one of the pieces of information we are trying to get from the oil and gas industry."

CDPHE regulators don't know how much low-level radioactive waste has been disposed of improperly at land lls, Schieffelin said. "We don't have information on the concentrations, either," he said.

Operators of existing land lls have raised questions about CDPHE's push for "a rule-making" to govern disposal of low-level radioactive waste in land lls. State of cials told Front Range local of cials from Weld County and as far south as Trinidad that they view them as partners in making sure land lls are safe. Once CDPHE approves land lls, local governments issue permits that let the land lls receive waste.

Waste Management Inc. of cials, who run seven land lls in Colorado, said Thursday that they are collaborating with CDPHE and others to clarify procedures related to disposal of naturally occurring radioactive material, which is present everywhere.

"Waste Management of Colorado does not accept low-level radioactive waste," company spokeswoman Isha Cogborn said.

The Colorado Oil and Gas Association, a fossil fuels industry trade group, did not respond to questions, but it issued a statement indicating COGA doesn't see disposal of low-level radioactive waste in land lls as a problem.

"While circumstances may be different in other states, there have been no indications this is an issue for oil and gas waste in Colorado," reads the statement attributed to COGA president Dan Haley. "We have spoken with the state, with members of the waste industry, and others to begin exploring the realities of this matter."

Some companies have approached Pawnee about using the new land ll.

It is unclear whether CDPHE is taking enforcement action in cases where radioactive waste was buried illegally in unapproved land lls.

A May 12 letter from Schieffelin to land ll operators alerted them that CDPHE "has become aware of a potential issue" of land lls accepting waste containing radioactive material. Land lls cannot accept such waste "unless a land ll is speci cally designated for that purpose," the letter said.

"By accepting TENORM in general and (industry) exploration and production TENORM waste in particular, your land ll could be in violation of the law. Many sites are not characterizing potential TENORM materials and, therefore, the department is concerned that many sites may be unknowingly in violation."

Legal responsibility shi s from waste generators to land ll operators once waste is accepted. If improper waste hasn't been characterized accurately, the land ll operator can seek remedies from waste generators.

Only Clean Harbors land ll in Adams County and the Southside Land ll in Pueblo County are approved to routinely handle low-level radioactive waste, CDPHE records show.

In 2016, Pawnee got approval from CDPHE and Weld County for its land ll designed to handle radioactive waste. Pawnee of cials say it will protect groundwater against radioactive contamination with a high-density polyethylene synthetic liner and clay barriers. The waste would be buried in containers, with electronic sensors to detect leaks, all kept at least 20 feet away from groundwater.

Some land lls recently received case-by-case approvals from state or local authorities to dispose of oil and gas industry low-level radioactive waste, Baughman said.

"It has become clear that what we have out there is an un-level playing eld at solid waste land lls," he told local government of cials.

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Bruce Finley of The Denver Post

Bruce Finley

Bruce Finley covers environment issues, the land air and water struggles shaping Colorado and the West. Finley grew up in Colorado, graduated from Stanford, then earned masters degrees in international relations as a Fulbright scholar in Britain and in journalism at Northwestern. He is also a lawyer and previously handled international news with on-site reporting in 40 countries.

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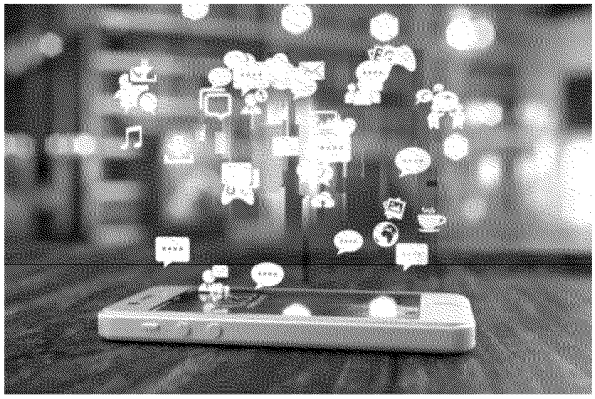

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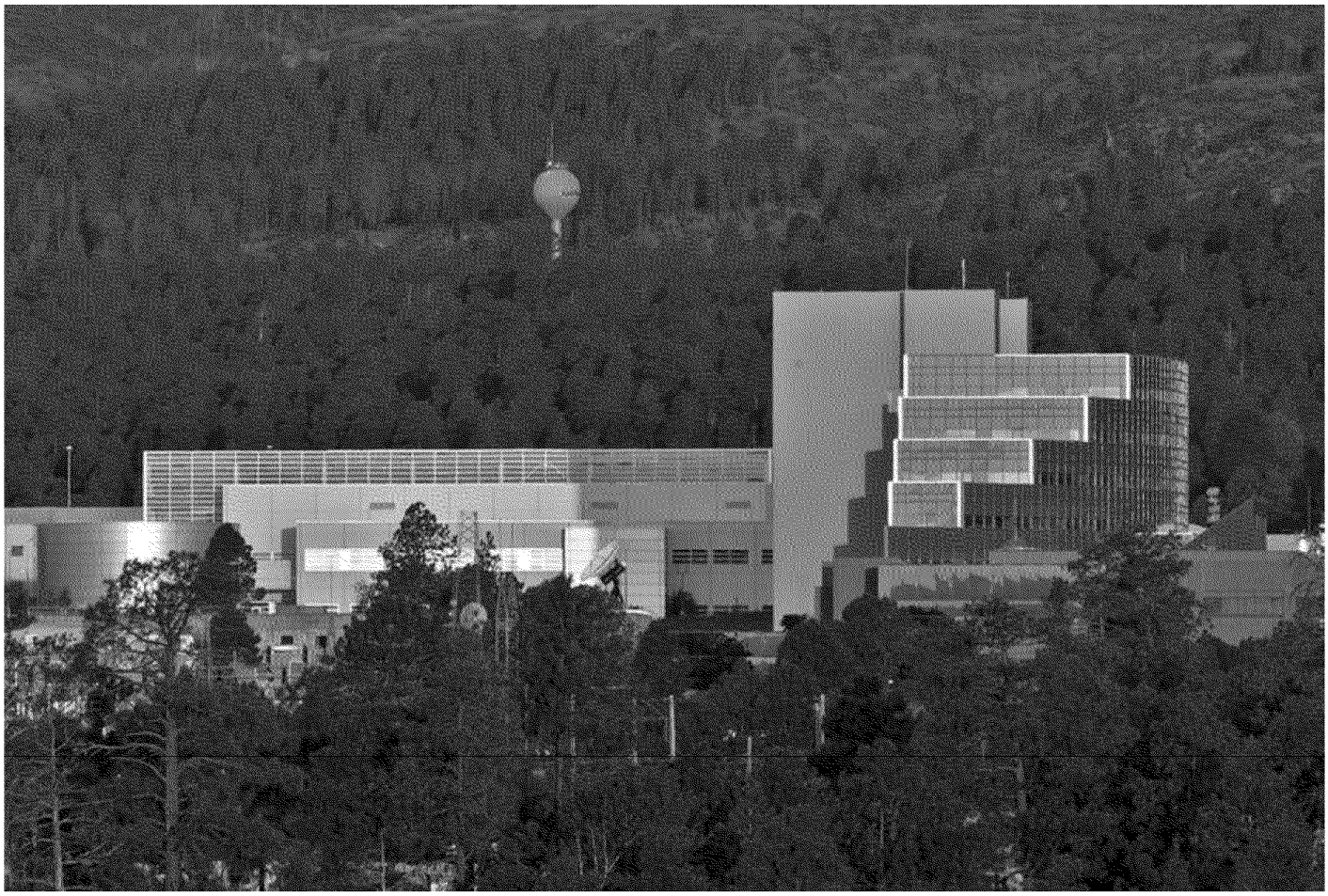

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CREATIVE COMMONS

Extent Of Los Alamos Chromium Contamination Still Uncertain – *Santa Fe New Mexican, Associated Press*

A top of×cial with the U.S. Energy Department says the agency is still uncertain about the extent of contamination from a massive plume of chromium that resulted from decades of poor waste management at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Doug Hintze with the Energy Department's environmental management ×eld of×ce in Los Alamos told state lawmakers during a recent hearing that cancer-causing chromium and other chemicals have continued to seep from the soil in Mortandad Canyon into the groundwater.

The Santa Fe New Mexican reports (http://bit.ly/2yzlJ7f) that chromium was detected at concentrations ×ve times the state limit in July in a newly drilled well outside the perimeter of the plume.

Lawmakers say they plan to appeal to New Mexico's congressional delegates and request more federal funds to expedite cleanup.

Oversight Panel: Nuclear Lab Workers Violated Safety Rules –*Santa Fe New Mexican, Associated Press*

Workers at Los Alamos National Laboratory producing a shell for a triggering device for nuclear weapons violated safety rules in August by storing too much material at one location in a facility for plutonium.

A memo from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board called the Aug. 18 incident at LANL a "criticality safety event" and said workers there discovered the placement error three days later when they moved the grapefruit-sized shell again.

The memo says workers at that point failed to follow proper reporting procedures. It doesn't specify whether the shell itself contained plutonium.

The Santa Fe New Mexican reports (http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/report-lanl-twice-violated-nuclear-safety-standards-in-aug/article_6692f11d-6c8d-5b4c-8f5d-1972330d3df6.html#utm_source=santafenewmexican.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletters%2Fyour-morning-headlines%2F%3F-dc%3D1506164402&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headline) a second incident in August resulted in nearly a dozen workers being exposed to alpha particles, with some contamination on protective clothing and one worker's hand.

Efforts to obtain comment from the federal agency that oversees Los Alamos weren't immediately successful. The lab said in a statement "there was no criticality accident" and that the lab "takes criticality safety very seriously and is conducting a full fact ×nding." In physics, the term criticality refers to the point at which a nuclear reaction is self-sustaining.

New Mexico Pursuit, Shootout Ends With Suspect In Custody – *Roswell Daily Record, Associated Press*

New Mexico authorities say a man is in custody after a pursuit and shootout.

The Roswell Daily Record reports (http://bit.ly/2yBtg6X) that no of×cers were injured, but the suspect is believed to have been hit by gun×re at least three times.

Authorities say the suspect, 30-year-old Jose Manual Diaz Montelongo, is expected to recover.

The incident began Sunday when authorities were called to investigate a possible drunken driver passed out behind the wheel. Once police got there, the suspect drove off.

There was a brief standoff before the suspect Øed, driving through fences. Authorities believe he ×red shots at of×cers as he left.

He stopped again, gun×re was exchanged and his last attempt to drive away was unsuccessful.

Authorities say Montelongo has a record and was wanted by federal authorities on a drug traf×cking charge.

KRQE-TV reports (http://krqe.com/2017/09/24/state-police-investigate-of×cer-involved-shooting/)New Mexico State Police, Roswell Police and the Sheriff's Of×ce are investigating the shooting.

Filmmaker, Family Begin New Look At New Mexico Cold Case – *KRQE-TV, Associated Press*

Nearly three decades since a 19-year-old woman disappeared from her small New Mexico town, the family with the help of a former friend and ×lmmaker are still searching for answers.

KRQE-TV reported (http://bit.ly/2fq5vdd) last week that ×lmmaker Melinda Esquibel began a new investigation into the disappearance of Tara Calico whose case has remained unsolved since she went missing from Belen in September 1988.

Esquibel with help from Calico's family began a documentary ×lm project examining the vanishing of her high school friend, but that examination became an investigation after ×nding the case ×les in disorder. She also began releasing what they have learned in a podcast.

Esquibel says progress has been made on the case, and they're sharing the information they gather with law enforcement agencies.

Fort Sill Apache Gets Grant To Build Fuel Station – *Las Cruces Sun-News, Associated Press*

The Fort Sill Apache Tribe has been awarded $800,000 from the federal government to help build a fuel station on its property in southern New Mexico.

Tribal Chairman Jeff Haozous tells the Las Cruces Sun-News (http://bit.ly/2nktMQw) that details still need to be worked out for the project at Akela Flats, but he believes it will be larger than a similar project the tribe recently started in Oklahoma.

That $2.5 million project includes construction of a 4,000-square-foot convenience store and a gas station.

Work on the New Mexico project is expected to begin next year.

The Fort Sill Apache Tribe is based in Oklahoma. But the federal government in 2011 designated a 30-acre parcel between Las Cruces and Deming as the tribe's reservation. The tribe ×rst acquired the land in 1998.

New Mexico School Board Opts For Bilingual Pledge – *Las Cruces Sun-News, Associated Press*

The Pledge of Allegiance will soon be recited in both English and Spanish at school board meetings in Las Cruces.

Board Chairwoman Maria Flores made the request that the pledge be recited in Spanish starting at the next public meeting.

Las Cruces Superintendent Greg Ewing told the Las Cruces Sun-News (http://bit.ly/2fmtcDg) that students are entitled under law to choose to have part of their education in Spanish and that reciting the pledge in Spanish during board meetings will be a wonderful experience for students.

He says inclusivity is the goal.

Districts in Albuquerque and Santa Fe have been reciting the pledge in both languages for years.

Archaeologists: More Protections Needed For Chaco Region - *By Susan Montoya Bryan, Associated Press*

Archaeologists and other researchers are calling for more protections of an expansive area surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

In a report released Friday, they say increased oil and gas development in northwestern New Mexico has the potential to destroy parts of the landscape that could provide a better understanding of the ancient civilization that once inhabited the area.

The report comes as federal of×cials revamp a management plan that will guide development as more companies look to tap the region's shale deposits.

A world heritage site, Chaco and its outlying archaeological remnants have become the focus of the ×ght over expanded drilling.

Outside park boundaries, scientists say new technology has uncovered indiscernible sections of ancient roads. They also pointed to less tangible features that could be at risk, such as views of distant buttes or mountain peaks.

$9.1M Project To Deliver More Water To Navajo Communities – *Associated Press*

Work has started on a $9.1 million project to improve access to water in several Navajo communities.

Navajo President Russell Begaye signed legislation last year to fund dozens of water and sanitation projects across the reservation.

Of×cials gathered in Greasewood on Friday for a groundbreaking ceremony for one of the projects. It's being funded partly through a $554 million settlement the tribe reached with the federal government over management of natural resources revenue.

Rex Kontz of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority says the project will double the water capacity for several communities, including Ganado, Greasewood, Dilkon and Teesto. A new well and a water ×ltering plant are planned.

The work is expected to take 18 months.

Other funding sources include federal grants and the tribal utility.

Handful Of Prescribed Fires Planned For New Mexico District – *Associated Press*

Fire of×cials with a ranger district on the Lincoln National Forest in southern New Mexico are planning a handful of prescribed ×res over the next several months to clear out dead trees and reduce fuel loads.

Of×cials on the Sacramento Ranger District say the work is scheduled to begin in October and run through next April as long as weather conditions permit.

The prescribed ×res will target a total of about 3,200 acres (1,295 hectares) around the communities of Mayhill, Weed and Cloudcroft. The largest of the projects will involve the burning of more than 2,100 acres (850 hectares) about 5 miles southwest of Weed.

Of×cials say reducing forest fuels can help minimize future wild×re risks.

They also warned that smoke may be visible during the prescribed ×res.

Eastern New Mexico To Drop Out-Of-State Tuition – *Associated Press*

Eastern New Mexico University says it's lowering tuition for out-of-state students next year.

The small university said Friday that its board of regents approved the drop in cost and that it will take effect in fall 2018.

Currently, out-of-state students pay 203 percent of what in-state students do. That'll be down to 150 percent.

The 2016-2017 tuition cost was roughly $6,000 for in-state students and a little over $15,000 for out-of-state students.

ENMU says it wants students to graduate with as little debt as possible and that it hopes to recruit more students from outside New Mexico.

New Mexico Regulators Consider Utility's Power Plan – *Albuquerque Journal, Associated Press*

New Mexico's largest electric provider wants to add another 50 megawatts of solar energy to its portfolio.

Public Service Co. of New Mexico also wants to boost output from its current wind and geothermal resources as part of a plan to comply with the state's renewable energy standards.

The state Public Regulation Commission wrapped up hearings on the proposal this week.

The Albuquerque Journal reports (http://bit.ly/2hmaT1o) that one environmental group has taken issue with the plan, saying the utility stacked the deck to gain ownership over the new solar farms rather than considering purchase agreements with independent power producers.

Utility of×cials and other environmentalists dismissed those arguments, saying the plan was more cost effective.

If approved, the utility would pay Albuquerque-based Affordable Solar to build ×ve small solar farms.

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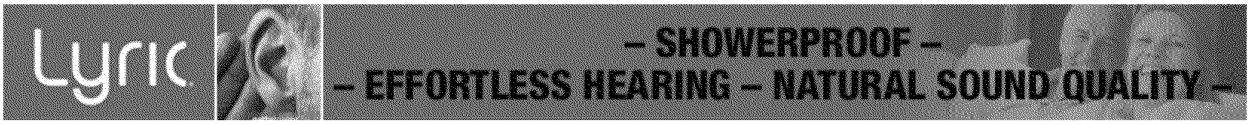

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

Carp, clams and crested floating-hearts: Louisiana on alert for invasive species

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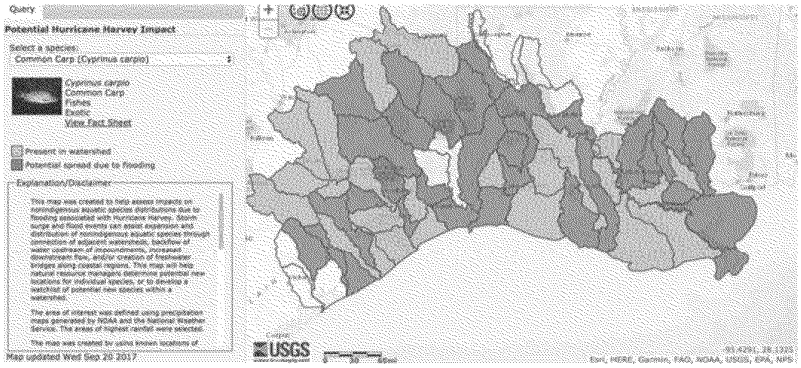
Updated on September 25, 2017 at 6:01 AM
Posted on September 25, 2017 at 6:00 AM



A new USGS web-based application shows where invasive species potential spread through Hurricane Harvey flood waters.

12
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By Sara Sneath
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

Hurricane Harvey flushed thousands of people from their homes in southeast Texas. It might also have flushed common carp, Asian clams and a flower called the crested floating-heart across the Texas boarder into Louisiana.

That's the premise behind a new web-based application developed by the U.S. Geological Survey to track invasive species. It assumes that Harvey's floodwaters created news pathways by which aquatic species could move from one body of water to another.

"The little app that we put together is brand new," said Pam Fuller, a Geological Survey invasive species biologist who developed the app. "We've got a lot of people who are very pleased with it; they think it's a great tool to use. It's also reached the attention of people at FEMA."

The application has a drop-down menu listing invasive species such as frogs, fish, mollusks and plants. Once the user selects a species, a color-coded map shows water systems that are known to have that species and water systems where the species had the potential to spread via Harvey's flooding.

One way that aquatic invasive species move from one water body to another is when nearby rivers crest, Fuller said. Their floodwaters intermingle, along with the critters and plants in them.

Another way is when freshwater pours out the mouth of adjacent rivers into a bay. The river water can create a freshwater zone that acts as a bridge between the rivers, allowing species to migrate from one stream to the other.

Invasive species can cause expensive problems. Fighting them in the United States costs $137 billion annually, according to the Center for Bioenvironmental Research. In New Orleans, $300 million is spent annually just on damage and control efforts for Formosan termites, according to the center.

The new app can help natural resource managers identify problem species that spread in Harvey's floodwaters, Fuller said. It also can help identify where to focus decontamination efforts, such as draining boats that traversed floodwaters to avoid spreading zebra mussels.

Fuller is working on developing a similar application for Hurricane Irma. It will launch in about a week, she said.

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Sara Sneath covers Louisiana coastal issues for NOLA.com | The Times Picayune. Reach her at ssneath@nola.com. Follow her on Twitter @SaraSneath.

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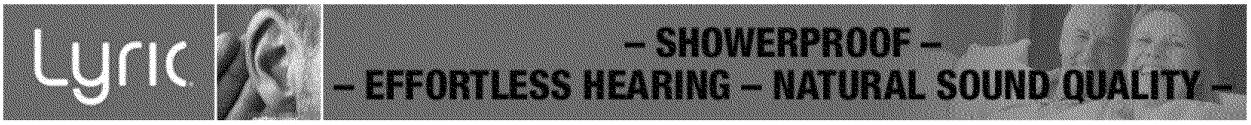

NEW ORLEANS OPINIONS

Ignoring science won't end environmental problems | Opinion

78

Updated on September 24, 2017 at 6:46 AM
Posted on September 24, 2017 at 6:45 AM

The Environmental Protection headquarters in Washington, Aug, 7, 2017. The agency's new leader, Scott Pruitt, has made no secret of his intent to undo years of regulations on everything from water pollution to climate change; he has also sought to conceal his work from the public and even his own employees. (Tom Brenner/The New York Times)

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By Bob Marshall, columnist

This just in: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Urged on by cheering crowds in Make America Great Again caps and GOP congressmen from oil producing states, President Trump last night stood on the steps of the Environmental Protection Agency Building and proclaimed "Carbon today! Carbon tomorrow! Carbon forever!"

He then put a torch to a 100-foot tall stack of climate research reports, science textbooks, first editions of "On the Origin of Species" -- and an effigy of Al Gore.

"We will purge the nation and our schools of the science that is a threat to our traditions and our way of life!" the president shouted. "We will rid our country of the plague of science wherever we find it!"

OK, that didn't happen. But the Trump administration shows every sign of moving in that direction.

One probably has to go back to Word War II to find a similar period when the United States experienced the kind of federal censorship that has been under way in the nine months since Trump took office. Only this time our president isn't trying to protect us from armed enemies intent on our destruction.

Just the opposite.

This censorship is aimed at facts -- at science and scientists -- who are showing us how to be safe.

A sampling of his efforts thus far:

EPA website removes climate science site from public view after two decades

NIH unit deletes references to climate 'change'

Trump silences government scientists with gag orders

As Arctic sea ice decline, budget cuts leave scientists blind

Administration wants to cut EPA by 31 percent - more than any other agency

Coal Mining Health Study Is Halted by Interior Department

Trump administration eliminating Arctic and Climate Envoys

EPA ends sponsorship of climate leadership program

The Trump administration just disbanded a federal advisory committee on climate change

Energy Sec. Rick Perry ignores his own grid study in promoting more fossil fuels

Next wave of EPA science advisers could include those who question climate change

EPA: air pollution rule should be delayed - despite its effect on children

EPA chief, rejecting agency's own analysis, declines to ban pesticide despite health concerns

Climate-Friendly Energy Star Program Could be Cut

Trump begins rollback of Obama's car pollution standards to curb emissions

Scientists around the world are worried about a Trump team proposal to ax NASA's 58-year mission to study the Earth

EPA moves to rewrite rules on coal power plant wastewater

Louisiana scientist among researchers purged from Interior Dept. for telling the truth about climate

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Trump administration halts pollution controls at Utah plants

Idaho Drops Climate Change Language From K-12 Science Curriculum

New Mexico high school curriculum would change "climate change" to climate "fluctuations"

Their effort to control the spread of truth in the Internet age would be laughable or just insulting if the consequences were not so serious. Many of this nation's highest elected officials -- all whom have taken oaths to protect the public -- are not only trying to deny

the conclusive science on the causes and consequences of warming, they are trying to stop further research.

There is a rich irony in the fact that most of this anti-science agenda is being pushed by political conservatives, a group that professes fealty to the idea that our democracy should be guided by the winners from the "free marketplace of ideas." Well, the scientific process that delivered the overwhelming consensus on the disasters confronting us if we do not reduce emissions is one of the greatest examples of an open competition of ideas. Research only gains consensus after it has been tested again and again and again. In this case, the results have almost always been the same -- and often more alarming.

Yet when it comes to climate science we have an administration and members of its supporting party not only determined to limit that competition of ideas, but to also pre-determine its winner.

Politicians and governments only engage in censorship when they are afraid the truth will harm their wallets or their power. In this case we have both, because those with the power to censor science arrived in office on the wallets of the industries fighting the truth.

Yes, truth always wins in the end, because it eventually becomes too obvious to deny. Unfortunately, our children will suffer the consequences for that delay.

Bob Marshall, former Outdoors editor for The Times-Picayune and former environmental reporter for The Lens, will be writing a regular column. He can be reached at bmarshallenviro@gmail.co

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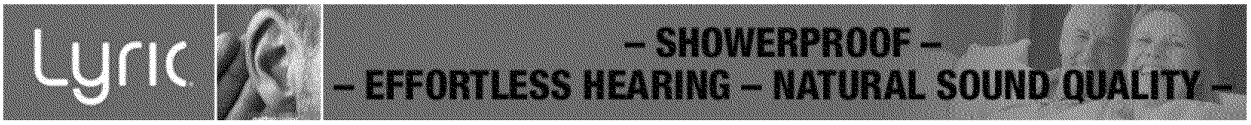

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

Weird creatures washing ashore, shrimping with diversions: This week's coastal news

Comment

Updated on September 24, 2017 at 9:48 PM
Posted on September 22, 2017 at 4:19 PM

A dead Risso's dolphin was discovered on Grand Isle Sept.15. Photo by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

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By Sara Sneath
NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

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Hurricanes Harvey and Irma pushed some unusual stuff ashore. A strange-looking eel was found on a Texas City, Texas, beach, and a historic-looking canoe was discovered in Cocoa, Fla.

In Grand Isle, officials responded to what they first thought was another whale washing ashore. It was later identified as Risso's dolphin.

Coastal reporters Travis Lux of WWNO radio and Sara Sneath of NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune discussed the unusual beach findings, as well as a new report on how the commercial shrimp industry might adjust to sediment diversions. Listen to their discussion above or Friday (Sept. 22) at 4:44 p.m. on WWNO.

Louisiana's 2017 coastal master plan calls for sediment diversion on both sides of the Mississippi River in Plaquemines Parish. The state wants to use controlled gates in the river levees to reintroduce river water and sediment to the surrounding marshes. Some commercial fishers worry the effort could devastate species that depend on the current balance of freshwater and saltwater.

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Sara Sneath covers Louisiana coastal issues for NOLA.com | The Times Picayune.
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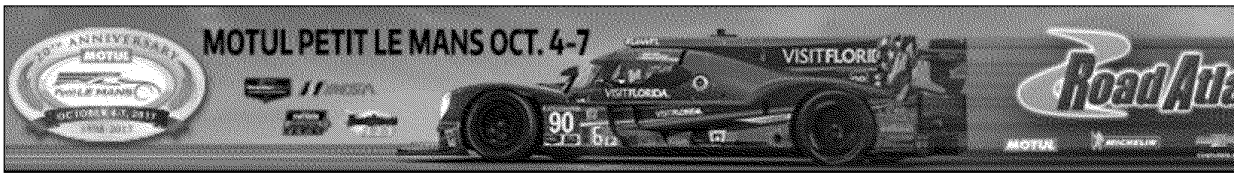
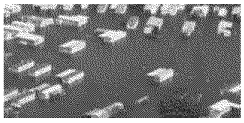


CDC: Mosquitoes carrying Zika, other deadly viruses could breed in 75 percent of the US

2

Stephanie Toone - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
2:56 p.m Friday, Sept. 22, 2017 Filed in Atlanta News

What You Should Know About Zika
Inform



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According to a CDC study, up to 75 percent of the contiguous United States may provide suitable conditions for several species of disease-spreading mosquitoes.

The recent study, published in the Public Journal of Entomology, found 71 percent of counties in the 48 contiguous states were suitable for the aegypti species and 75 percent could support albopictus species.

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Researchers found that the dengue, chikungunya and Zika viruses in particular represented a "growing public health threat in parts of the United States where they are established," according to the journal's report.

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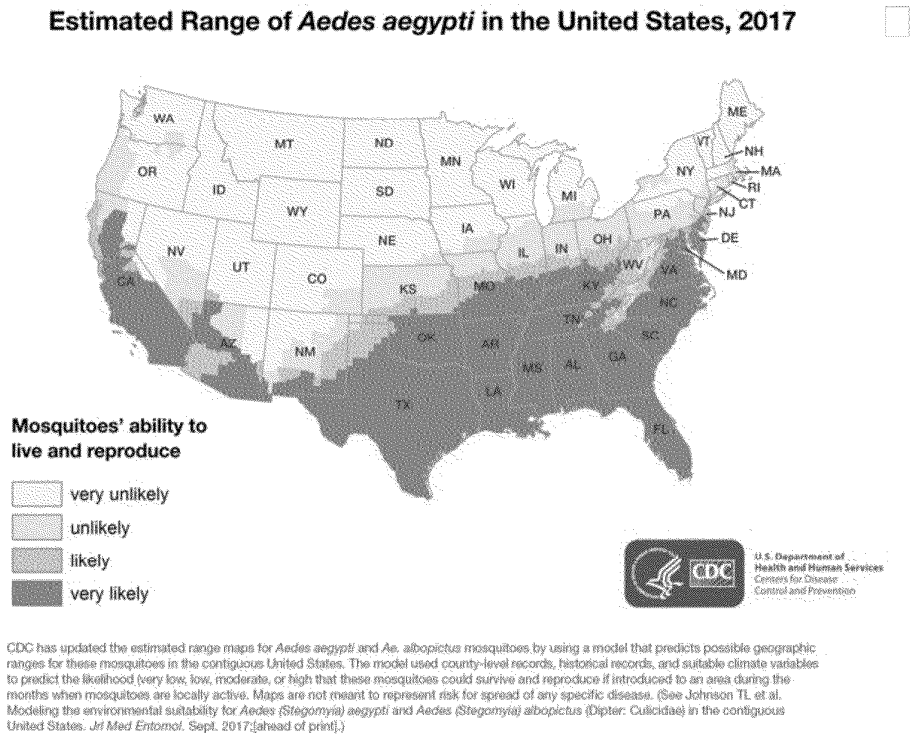
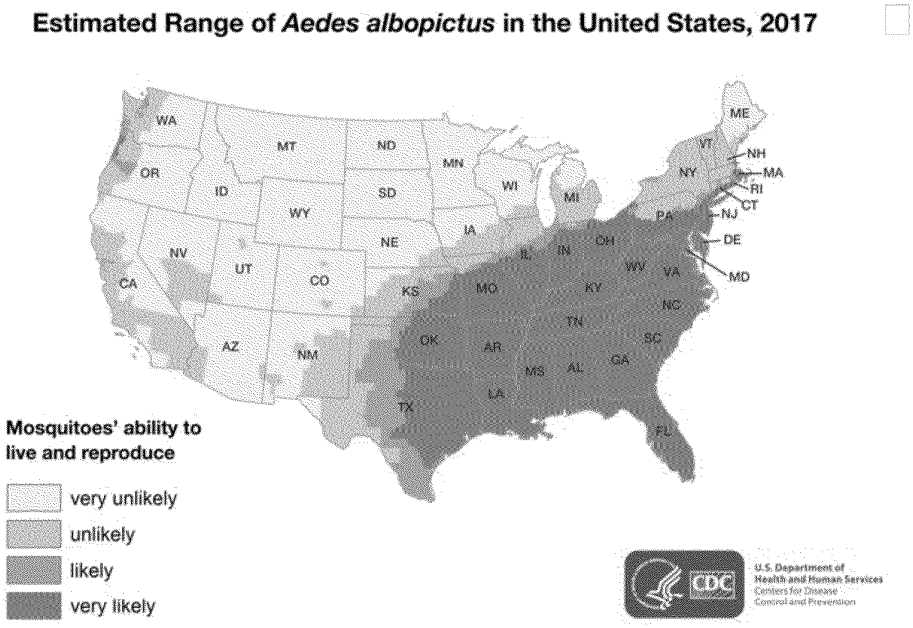


CDC has updated the estimated range maps for *Aedes aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus* mosquitoes by using a model that predicts possible geographic ranges for these mosquitoes in the contiguous United States. The model used county-level records, historical records, and suitable climate variables to predict the likelihood (very low, low, moderate, or high that these mosquitoes could survive and reproduce if introduced to an area during the months when mosquitoes are locally active. Maps are not meant to represent risk for spread of any specific disease. (See Johnson TL et al. Modeling the environmental suitability for *Aedes (Stegomyia) aegypti* and *Aedes (Stegomyia) albopictus* (Dipter: Culicidae) in the contiguous United States. *Jrl Med Entomol.* Sept. 2017;[ahead of print].)



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The maps show the CDC's "best estimate" of

potential ranges of where Ae. aegypti and Ae. albopictus mosquitoes could survive and reproduce if introduced. The maps do not show where the mosquitoes are currently nor where there is a risk of transmission, Rebecca Eisen, a research biologist with the CDC, said in a statement.

“In other words, these maps show areas where CDC predicts Aedes aegypti and albopictus mosquitoes could survive and reproduce if introduced to an area during the months when mosquitoes are locally active,” Eisen told the publication.

Temperature is a key factor. If there were just one day in winter on average when the temperature exceeds 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the chances that the area would be suitable for mosquitoes increased. Areas with consistently cold temperatures, however, have reduced chances that the insects’ eggs would sustain through the winter, specifically for aegypti, according to Eisen. Rainfall had a significant influence on albopictus, as it relies more on water courses filled by rainwater to lay its eggs than aegypti.

The maps will help health professionals monitor for signs of the mosquitoes.

“Surveillance efforts can be focused in counties where Aedes aegypti and albopictus could survive and reproduce if introduced to an area during the months when mosquitoes are locally active or at least survive during summer months if introduced,” Eisen said.

The CDC suggested taking the following steps to avoid mosquitoes and potential disease:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens
- Use insect repellents approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, treating clothing with an insecticide, permethrin.

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Exxon Mobil launches new methane emissions reduction program

Jordan Blum, Houston Chronicle Updated 8:07 am, Monday, September 25, 2017

Southwestern Energy workers check on a suspected pipe leak at a well pad site in Damascus, Ark., June 28, 2016. The reputation of natural gas as a 'clean energy' in the fight against climate change rests in part on the abilities of workers tracking down and eliminating methane leaks in the nation's pipeline infrastructure. (Andrea Morales/The New York Times)

Exxon Mobil is launching a new program focused on reducing methane emissions and leaks from its U.S. oil and gas production and pipelines.

The project is focusing on installing environmentally efficient equipment and more leak-detection sensors throughout its onshore shale oil and gas operations in the U.S.

Exxon Mobil's XTO Energy subsidiary is leading the project.

The energy sector - including oil and gas production and coal mining - is the largest source of U.S. methane emissions, which are a major contributor to the planet's greenhouse gas emissions, according to the U.S. Energy Department. Methane is a primary component of natural gas, and the surging gas production from the shale boom has given rise to increasing methane emissions throughout much of the past 15 years.

"We need to minimize our impact on the environment," said XTO President Sara Ortwein. "Focusing on emissions reductions - and here with methane - is one more step."

XTO recently completed a pilot project in West Texas' Permian Basin. While that's primarily an oil-producing region, much of the Permian also produces lots of associated natural gas from the shale rock formations.

Exxon Mobil is starting a three-year phase out of all of its gas-powered devices on its production equipment that control the various valves, pressure levels and more, which are called high-bleed pneumatic devices. The equipment emits methane and is being replaced with lower-emission designs that use compressed air instead.

XTO also will add more lead-detection equipment to its pipelines and its gathering and processing equipment out near oil and gas fields.

Ortwein said Exxon Mobil is making a sizable financial equipment to this project, but that it's just underway and the amount of money needed is yet to be determined.

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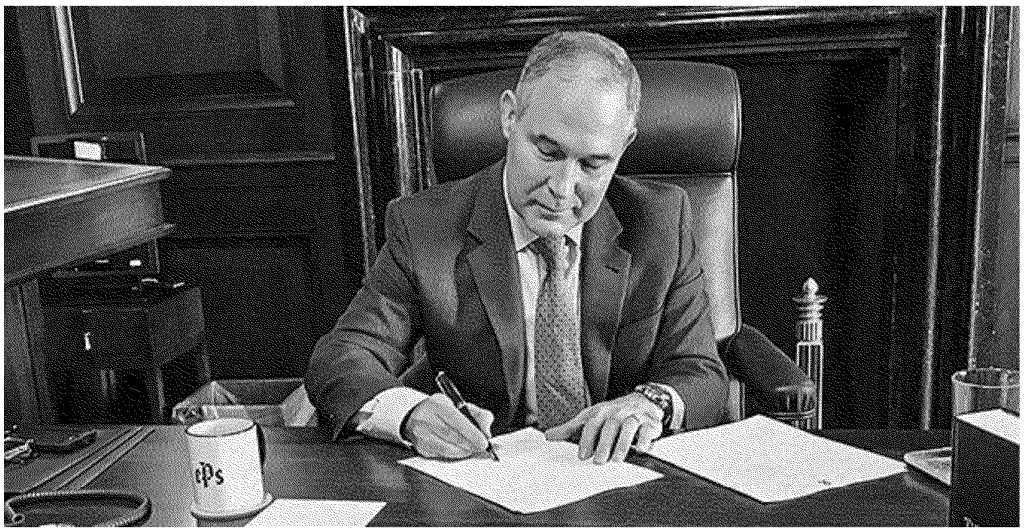
EPA

Pruitt plans to release schedule

Kevin Bogardus, E&E News reporter
Published: Friday, September 22, 2017



U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will soon release his schedule to the public. @EPA ScottPruitt/Twitter

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is planning to release his public calendar, long sought by his critics on Capitol Hill and in the environmental movement.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), ranking member on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, offered faint praise for the move by Pruitt. Earlier this year, the Democratic senator had called on the EPA chief to release his schedule on a monthly basis (*E&E News PM*, March 17).

"I urged the new administrator to commit to transparency at the agency and make his calendar available back in March. Since then, my requests have been ignored, but perhaps this is a turning point," Carper said in a statement yesterday.

"I hope that this is a step in the right direction, but, as the song goes, 'we've only just begun.' I am hopeful that Administrator Pruitt will continue to focus on responses to my other outstanding requests for information."

Carper added that he was unwilling to move forward on EPA nominees until the agency proves more responsive to Democrats' requests for information.

An EPA spokeswoman told E&E News that Pruitt was releasing his calendar for "full transparency" and challenged Carper to do the same.

"In full transparency, EPA is making Administrator Pruitt's schedule publicly available; given that transparency in scheduling is so important to Ranking EPW Member Carper, we expect that he will do the same," said Liz Bowman, the agency spokeswoman.

Pruitt's schedule should be released soon.

In a voicemail left for E&E News earlier this week, an EPA employee in the general counsel's office said at the end of next week, the agency will post online Pruitt's public calendar for his entire tenure at the agency. The move by the agency comes after several Freedom of Information Act requests for the EPA chief's schedule.

Unlike Pruitt, past EPA administrators did release a public schedule on a periodic basis.

Typically, the public calendar was sparse on details and didn't include all of the agency leader's meetings. But it was considered to be a move toward transparency by EPA, which past Administrator Bill Ruckelshaus said the agency should strive for in his famous "Fishbowl Memo."

EPA administrators' private calendars, which usually have more details on meetings behind closed doors, have been released in the past under FOIA. Pruitt's private itinerary has come to light, too, at least during his early days at EPA.

E&E News obtained under FOIA Pruitt's calendar for roughly his first five weeks in office. The document showed that the EPA administrator was scheduled to meet with senior executives in the automotive, coal, oil and gas, and utility industries (*Greenwire*, June 15).

Several more FOIA requests by E&E News for Pruitt's private calendar remain unfulfilled today.

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ARKANSAS

State advances herbicide ban, setting up Monsanto fight

Published: Friday, September 22, 2017

Arkansas officials have advanced a plan to ban farmers from using the controversial herbicide dicamba next summer, likely setting up a legal battle between the state and Monsanto Co., the maker of the chemical.

The Arkansas State Plant Board yesterday brought the state one step closer to solidifying a rule that would ban the herbicide between April 16 and Oct. 31 next year.

Arkansas farmers this summer sparked a public debate over the issue, with many saying dicamba destroys soybeans and other crops not genetically modified to tolerate the chemical when it drifts after being sprayed at other farms.

The state banned its use for 120 days in July. U.S. EPA is also reviewing the chemical, though an agency official said the herbicide will be available next year under federal rules (*Greenwire*, Sept. 20).

Monsanto has already started pushing back on Arkansas' proposed ban, saying it cannot be blamed for farmers misusing dicamba and not following labeling instructions.

"All options are on the table" for the company's next move, said Ty Vaughn, Monsanto's global regulatory vice president.

A state legislative subcommittee could give the ban final approval after a public hearing and public comment period (Tom Polansek, Reuters, Sept. 21). — NS

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TEXAS

After Harvey, experts worry about climate, dam safety

Published: Friday, September 22, 2017

As the oceans warm and extreme weather events like Hurricane Harvey become more common on the Gulf Coast, climatologists are warning that Texas' dams might not be up to the test.

Dams are generally designed with the most extreme scenario in mind, but weather experts say Harvey matched or exceeded the maximum amounts of rainfall that the state's dams are designed to hold off.

"The probable maximum precipitation amount should never be reached," said Tye Parzybok, the chief meteorologist at MetStat Inc., a Colorado-based company. "It should never get close to it."

The relationship between hurricanes and climate change is still uncertain. But there is widespread agreement among scientists that climate change causes warmer oceans and, in turn, more precipitation.

There are more than 4,000 dams in Texas, 1,200 of which are already considered high risk. Safety standards are based on historical rainfall data, but the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality already began updating those standards last year based on new trends.

"I'm not saying they're unsafe," said state climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon of Texas' dams. "They will be less safe than they were designed to be" (Ryan Maye Handy, *Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 21). — NS

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BUSINESS TOPICS

ENERGY 2 DAYS AGO

Federal decision on solar panel imports could cost Texas jobs, slow down installations

Jeff Mosier, Energy and Environment Writer

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The U.S. International Trade Commission decided 4-0 Friday that imported solar cells and panels are threatening the domestic manufacturing industry, potentially setting the stage for President Donald Trump to set tariffs, a price floor or take some other action early next year.

The federal action is widely expected to increase the cost of residential and commercial solar projects, which have taken off thanks in part to cheap solar cells and panels. The $26 billion national industry employees 9,400 in Texas, according to The Solar Foundation.

"On behalf of the entire sola [illegible] welcome this important step toward securing relief f [illegible] ttered dozens of factories, leaving thousands of workers without jobs," said Juergen Stein, president and CEO of SolarWorld Americas, one of the companies petitioning the commission to take action.

Georgia-based Suniva filed the initial complaint in April, and SolarWorld, which has a large manufacturing facility in Oregon, later joined the petition.

The two petitioners argue that restricting imports would revive a segment of the domestic solar equipment manufacturing sector. But solar industry leaders fear the higher cost would slow down the solar-energy sector growth and prevent the creation of 88,000 new jobs.

Abigail Ross Hopper, president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association, said that almost all the solar sector would suffer if prices were artificially increased. The industry grouping estimates that doubling the cost of imported solar cells and a price floor on panels would "destroy two-thirds of demand."

A federal decision threatens thousands of jobs in Texas' fast-growing solar industry

The commission announced Friday that solar cells and panels were "being imported into the United States in such increased quantities as to be a substantial cause of serious injury, or threat of serious injury."

The commission has scheduled a hearing next month on what action is needed to protect the domestic manufacturers. A recommendation would go to the president this fall.

Other countries would have the opportunity to challenge tariffs or similar actions at the World Trade Organization. The petitioners, SolarWorld Americas and Suniva, are asking for protection from imports for at least four years.

Deadlines for solar decision

Date	Action
Oct. 3, 2017	ITC hearing on potential remedies
Nov. 13, 2017	ITC decision due to President Donald Trump
Jan. 12, 2018	Trump deadline to decide on action
15 days after signing	When tariffs or other relief would take effect

SOURCE: DMN Research

"Any new tariffs are likely to increase costs and reduce demand for installations, disrupting the solar jobs market that now employs 260,000 workers in the United States and is valued in the tens of billions of dollars," said Andrea Luecke, president and executive director of The Solar Foundation.

Lesley Ritter, an assistant vice president at Moody's Investors Service, said in a written statement, that the decision would have "a negative impact on the economics of solar generation, and could dampen the pace of decarbonization."

Higher prices could also cost the federal government through the 30 percent tax credit it offers for solar projects. If the current 2018 forecast is accurate, taxpayers would pay an extra $1.23 billion in tax credits, according to an estimate from Cowen & Co. analyst Jeffrey Osborne.

Texas' moment in the sun; Lone Star State a powerful force in solar energy

Supporters of the trade action have argued that they are trying to rebalance the industry from 2016, when solar cell and panel prices cratered. The petitioners have blamed excess capacity produced for

"We brought this action because the U.S. solar manufacturing industry finds itself at the precipice of extinction at the hands of foreign market overcapacity," according to a statement from Suniva, one of the petitioners. "President Trump can remedy this injury with relief that ensures U.S. energy dominance that includes a healthy U.S. solar ecosystem and prevents China and its proxies from owning the sun."

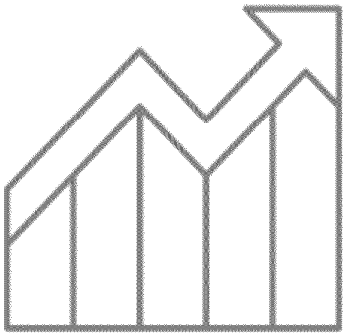
John Berger, CEO of Houston-based residential solar installation company Sunnova, issued a harsh statement against the companies that filed the federal complaint.

"It is disappointing that two uniquely mismanaged and uncompetitive foreign-owned companies have been able to benefit from a process meant to protect U.S. businesses that have truly been harmed by subsidized foreign competition," Berger said.

The bankrupt Suniva is majority owned by a Chinese company, which opposed this trade case. A creditor in bankruptcy court has spearheaded this trade effort by Suniva. SolarWorld Americas' parent company is German and filed for insolvency, that country's version of bankruptcy.

Opponents of this trade case have emphasized the company's foreign ownership, seemingly to undercut their arguments about protecting U.S. manufacturing and jobs.

Bloomberg contributed to this report.



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State seeks more data before granting permit to hog farm in river's watershed

By Emily Walkenhorst twitter
This article was published September 23, 2017 at 2:59 a.m.

14

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The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality sent a letter this week to the owners of C&H Hog Farms asking for more documentation of their facility and plans as the department continues to evaluate the facility's permit application.

The documents are already in the public record, Buffalo River Watershed Alliance board member Brian Thompson told the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission on Friday. Thompson called the request, which allows C&H 90 days to respond, a delay tactic and an "affront to public trust."

"What's troubling is their giving C&H three months to provide documentation that's already in the public record," Thompson said. "This process could easily go on for another six months. The way it's going, maybe it could go on for another year."

C&H Hog Farms is located near Mount Judea in Newton County and sits on Big Creek about 6 miles from where the creek converges with the Buffalo National River.

The farm has drawn the ire of people concerned about the risk its hog manure poses to the Buffalo River. The facility is the only federally classified large hog farm in the river's watershed, which has been home to several small hog farms. C&H is currently permitted to house up to 6,000 piglets and 2,503 sows.

C&H applied for a new permit April 7, 2016, and has been operating under an extension of its old permit. The department held off making a preliminary decision on the new permit until February, after months of a Pollution Control and Ecology Commission appeal on another permit that sought to apply manure from C&H on land in the Buffalo River's watershed. The department accepted comments on the new permit application through early April of this year.

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The department requested geological site investigations performed at the facility; construction plans for its waste management system; information, including which water bodies are located nearby, related to the facility's nutrient management plan; status of the facility's manure storage ponds and the operation and maintenance plan for the pond levee.

Thompson delivered his statements during the public comment portion of the commission's meeting Friday, and no commissioners asked questions of Thompson.

After the meeting, department officials said they had requested the documents so they could be a part of the public record in C&H's new permit application and in response to public comments on C&H's permit application.

Department Director Becky Keogh said her agency did not have a deadline for deciding whether to issue a new permit to C&H Hog Farms.

While the Arkansas Legislature passed a law earlier this year giving the department six months to decide on Regulation 5 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits, C&H's permit is grandfathered into old law, according to Caleb Osborne, department associate director in charge of the office of water quality.

The department has explored ways to reduce the time it takes to issue new permits and permit modifications, but Keogh said C&H's permit was exceptional, given its controversy.

"This is a permit that is going to take time," she said.

The new permit indicates the facility would house up to six boars of about 450 pounds, 2,672 sows of at least 400 pounds and 750 piglets of about 14 pounds, and it estimates that the two waste-holding ponds would contain up to 2,337,074 gallons of hog manure, similar to what is contained now. Additional waste and wastewater would be applied over certain sites as fertilizer.

Metro on 09/23/2017

Print Headline: Hog farm permit decision put off; more data sought

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TEXAS

EPA clarifies earlier FEMA statement on Texas toxic sites

BY MICHAEL BIESECKER
Associated Press

SEPTEMBER 24, 2017 10:37 PM

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency said Sunday it has recovered 517 containers filled with unidentified, potentially hazardous material found floating in or washed up along Texas waterways after the devastating floods from Hurricane Harvey receded.

The agency's statement sought to clarify an earlier media release saying the containers were recovered from highly contaminated toxic waste sites. EPA said that statement issued Friday night by the Federal Emergency Management Agency created confusion by conflating two separate issues.

The FEMA media release summarizing the federal response Harvey's historic floods said EPA had "conducted assessments of 43 Superfund sites and recovered 517 containers of unidentified, potentially hazardous material."

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The Associated Press reported about the statement Saturday afternoon, after EPA's press office did not responded to questions sent by email to top staffers the night before.

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Gray did not respond to questions about why he and other EPA press staff had not sought to clarify the issue for more than 44 hours. Also left unanswered are questions about the results of EPA's assessments at two highly contaminated Houston-area Superfund sites flooded by Harvey's record shattering rains.

EPA has not responded to more than a dozen calls and emails from AP over the last two weeks.

AP reported Sept. 18 that a government hotline had received calls about three separate spills at the U.S. Oil Recovery Superfund site, a former petroleum waste processing plant outside Houston contaminated with a dangerous brew of cancer-causing chemicals.

Records obtained by the AP showed workers at the site reported spills of unknown materials in unknown amounts affecting nearby Vince Bayou. Local pollution control officials photographed three large tanks that had been used to store potentially hazardous waste completely underwater on Aug. 29.

EPA has still not disclosed the spills or what was in the tanks before they flooded. The agency says its staff visited the site the following week and saw no visual evidence of contaminants in the bayou.

—

Associated Press reporter Frank Bajak contributed from Houston.

—

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HURRICANE NEWS AND STORM TRACKING

Why has the 2017 hurricane season been so bad?

22

Updated on September 23, 2017 at 4:01 PM
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By The Washington Post

The 2017 hurricane season has been a full-on assault from Mother Nature. We are under siege, and our attackers have benign names like Harvey and Irma and Maria. But they are callous, powerful, indiscriminate, terrifying, destructive, merciless and relentless.

Is Earth trying to eject us from the planet? Again and again and again the harshest of winds and hardest of rains has pounded on the most-defenseless territories we have. The Caribbean islands, hanging out in open sea. The Florida peninsula, jutting out into danger. The Texas coastline, low-lying and concrete-laden. Nearly a full month of back-to-back-to-back disasters.

This hurricane season - not yet even close to finished - has generated more destructive, land-falling storms than the past few years combined. Four of this year's monsters went on to become Category 4 or 5, and three of those made landfall in U.S. territory.

Hurricane Harvey seemed to spin up in an instant before hitting land on Aug. 26, only to come to rest for days over Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana. A mind-boggling 19 trillion gallons of rain fell in that storm, which triggered unprecedented flooding. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott estimates Harvey will cost the state up to $180 billion - more than epic Hurricane Katrina.

Hurricane Irma was one of the strongest ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean. When Irma maintained 180 mph wind speeds for 37 hours, it set a record for most intense storm for such a long duration - anywhere on Earth. It made landfall Sept. 10, strafing

the Florida Keys before terrorizing both Florida coasts in vastly different ways. It knocked out power to millions of people, and some are still waiting for the lights to come back on.

Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico 10 days later as the strongest storm to hit the island since the 1928 San Felipe hurricane. It thrashed the U.S. territory with winds over 100 mph and more than 30 inches of rain. All of Puerto Rico lost power and was under flash flood warnings. The full extent of the damage, and the loss of life, might not be known for some time. It could take months to restore infrastructure.

All of this in just four weeks.

It spurs so many questions: Is this barrage random? Is it part of a natural cycle? Is it the result of climate change? Have we done this to ourselves?

Officials at the highest levels - who create, pass and sign the very policies that affect the environment - are bending over backward to dodge those questions. The political tension is palpable.

"To have any kind of focus on the cause and effect of the storm; versus helping people, or actually facing the effect of the storm, is misplaced," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told CNN as Hurricane Irma approached Florida.

When the question was posed to President Donald Trump on his way to visit hurricane-battered Florida, he replied: "We've had storms over the years that have been bigger than this."

To our struggling politicians, Pope Francis offered some advice: Climate change is happening, and you have a "moral responsibility" to do something about it.

"Those who deny this must go to the scientists and ask them," he said on a recent trip to Colombia. "They speak very clearly."

If they continue to deny climate change, he added, "history will judge those decisions."

This hurricane season is, indisputably, a nightmare. And it's indisputable that climate change is affecting our weather. The fingerprint of climate change is on every storm, it's in every raindrop and sunny day. It is a new, yet untested and ill-understood, factor in the way our planet works.

But there are additional elements that had to come together to create such a hellish year.

Hurricanes exist to cool the tropics. The vast majority of sunlight beats down in the 23 degrees north and south of the equator. Without something to disperse the energy toward the poles, Earth's climate would become unbalanced, quickly.

These planetary heat engines sprout from relatively weak clusters of thunderstorms - waves of low pressure from the coast of Africa - and fester in the warm waters of the Atlantic. They feed on tropical moisture and the sun's intense energy and, eventually, if they get large enough, will start to spin thanks to Earth's top-like motion.

Hurricanes can form in rapid succession and travel thousands of miles across the Atlantic, like rail cars on a train track or airplanes lining up for takeoff. Because they can gain steam, spinning themselves up into monstrosities, it's a trip that can end in the devastation of places like St. Croix, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Southwest Louisiana. One after the other.

We saw this alignment in 2005, and we're seeing it again in 2017.

"This isn't a random coming together," said Gerry Bell, a hurricane climate specialist at NOAA. It's a specific combination of environmental factors.

The Atlantic Ocean is in a pattern that's particularly favorable for hurricanes. Every couple of decades, the pattern flips, but it's been positive since about 1995.

There have been some exceptionally big seasons in the past two decades. The extreme years tend to happen when the things that weaken hurricanes are not present - like El Nino and chaotic, hurricane-killing winds over the Atlantic Ocean. When those forces stand down, the favorable pattern goes to work.

Factor in some exceptionally warm ocean water and it becomes nearly impossible to avoid a strong season.

"We are seeing some of the hottest ocean temperatures in the planet in the western Caribbean Sea," said Michael Ventrice, a research meteorologist at The Weather Company. "This is like rocket fuel for developing tropical cyclones. A major concern for late-season development."

But hurricanes need to make landfall to generate the kind of disasters seen so far this year. Steering winds determine their path, though they aren't always as predictable as forecasters would like. Which Florida coast would receive Hurricane Irma's landfall - Miami or the Gulf - was a result of uncertainty in the wind forecast. It hit near Naples, Fla. and went north, but the massive storm covered the entire state, knocking out power to millions and causing flooding and damage from the Florida Keys to Jacksonville and beyond.

The Florida Peninsula is only about 100 miles wide - a tiny distance on a global scale. Hurricane Irma was going to turn north somewhere near South Florida, forecasters knew that. But a few miles of deviation meant some people were spared while others were inundated with storm surge and damaging winds.

In the same way, Puerto Rico avoided Irma's destructive inner core, only to be devastated by Hurricane Maria. These winds are fickle, but deadly.

If we zoom out to the big picture, though, the steering winds over the Atlantic Ocean have been very predictable this season. Unfortunately for all the humans who live there, the winds have been guiding hurricanes straight into the Caribbean islands and the southern United States.

It's a significant shift. For the past decade, those winds were coming from the west, pushing hurricanes away from land and out to sea, rendering them largely harmless.

"We were very fortunate, since 2005," Bell said. "But it was just a matter of time before they were going to start making landfall again."

This year is remarkably similar to 2005, when storm after storm exploded over the Caribbean and then made landfall. Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma are among the more memorable of that year.

The 2017 season is only half over. There will be more storms, and the wind isn't going to change any time soon. At least one forecast company thinks this heightened level of activity will continue.

"I would be surprised if October wasn't more active than normal, with one or more potential threats to the eastern Gulf Coast originating in the central or western Caribbean," Ryan Truchelut, the president of WeatherTiger, predicted.

More potential threats, more hurricanes. More lives lost and more destruction.

"A lot of people have already been through a lifetime of impacts, but there are going to be more storms, we know that," Bell warned. "They have to stay prepared."

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The Washington Post's Jason Samenow contributed to this report.

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MY VIEW

Keep methane rule intact

By Tom Mavilia Sep 23, 2017

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt: As a resident of New Mexico, I am extending to you a cheerful and hearty welcome to come and live and work in the middle of the Permian Basin or in the town of Farmington.

Since you do not think there is a problem with leaking methane and want to delay the implementation of the Leak Detection and Repair part of the Methane Rule, you should come here and experience it, firsthand. Breathe deeply!

Please, bring your family, I'm sure Cade and McKenna would love it, also. Oh, you probably do not think this is such a good idea for your family. Am I correct? But it is all right for other families to live with respiratory ailments. Being head of the EPA, your responsibility is to the people of the United States.

When you enter the doors of the First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, do you think of all of the sick children and their parents having to live with pollution at their doorsteps? After all, being a Christian means that mankind is your business and responsibility, not making money for the fossil fuel industry.

Well, here are the facts. Children miss 500,000 days of school nationally each year because of smog resulting from oil and gas pollution. A study in Pennsylvania showed that there were greater percentages of preterm births among women who lived near natural gas plants and that their babies had lower birth weights. But you know this already.

When you attended your Cabinet hearing to be administrator of the EPA, you said, “I am blessed today to have my family in attendance with me.” What type of air do they breathe? Is your home next to a gas plant? Oh, and here we go again, you were “blessed.” Always thinking about God but never acting like a Christian.

Your record stands out loud and clear. You are an enemy of the people and have no right being head of any environmental organization. You have accepted more than $300,000 from the oil and gas industry over the years. When you became attorney general of Oklahoma, one of your first acts was to abolish the Oklahoma EPA. Why would you do such a thing? Money. Well, God will judge you and your actions. Don’t you need clean air? Clean water?

In closing, I would like to remind you that you are in bed with the devil, making deals to further your own greed and those of your buddies in the oil industry. I hope you sleep well tonight, while children are up coughing.

The one ray of hope is that it is no longer economically feasible to use oil and gas. New Mexico is already starting to turn things around in favor of renewable energy. Our New Mexico communities deserve the good-neighbor, common-sense, low-cost methane rules — the EPA should enforce the Obama-era Methane Rule.

Tom Mavilia is a retired teacher living in Arroyo Hondo and a volunteer trail crew member for the Carson National Forest.

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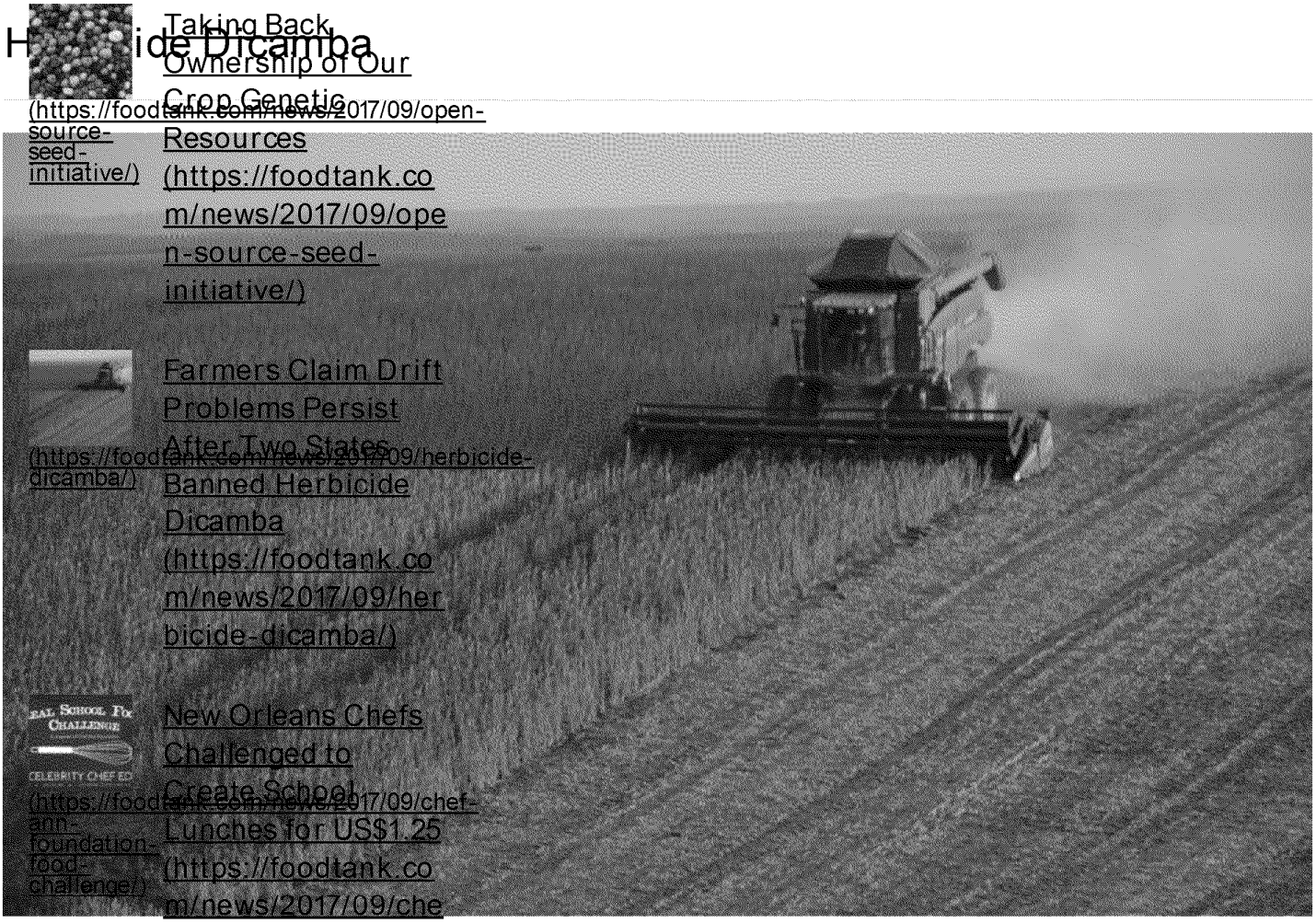

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Photo courtesy of Charles Ricardo via PixaBay.

Researchers from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture found

esources/news/august2017/08-10-2017-Ark-NEREC-Field-Day.aspx) in Stuttgart that every formulation of the herbicide dicamba they tested—

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volatility, and tendency to drift away from the location it was originally sprayed. Some formulations remained volatile for up to 36 hours, even when proper application instructions were followed carefully.

Throughout the 2017 growing season, farmers in nearly a dozen states have claimed that these dicamba-based herbicides, newly approved for regular growing season use, were becoming airborne and causing severe puckering, wilting, and stunted growth in crops (http://modernfarmer.com/2017/07/dicamba-drift/) that had not been genetically engineered to be resistant to the herbicide.

Dicamba has been used for decades (http://modernfarmer.com/2017/07/dicamba-drift/) to kill weeds before crops were planted, which meant its volatility was less of a problem. But in 2015, with the intention for dicamba to become used during the re[illegible]santo released genetically modified dicamba-resistant se[illegible] by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). To ac[illegible]anto created a new spray, which was meant to be "s[illegible] that was not EPA-approved until late 2016. During that or[illegible] spray older formulations of dicamba on the new seeds, si[illegible]en resolved yet. However, some farmers sprayed anyway, which reportedly affected more than 200,000 acres of soybeans across several states last summer, according to Modern Farmer (http://modernfarmer.com/2016/08/dicamba/).

Te[illegible] areas: In October 2016, one farmer on the Missouri-A[illegible] shot and killed another farmer (http://modernfarmer.com/2016/11/pesticide-drift-leads-alleged-murder/) over the issue of dicamba drift.

This growing season was the first that both the seeds and new "stickier" spray were available. But in the Arkansas' researchers August 2017 report, they claim that after th[illegible]perly followed industry-provided labels on the newly released dicamba fo[illegible]ions volatility remains an issue. Weed scientist Tom Barber said his laboratory tests (https://www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2017/08-10-2017-Ark-NEREC-Field-Day.aspx) showed new products to be less volatile than old ones, but "when you [illegible] a field setting where volatility measurements are based on soil[illegible] differences in volatility…are not as evident."

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In [illegible] weed-killer effective immediately, and Arkansas instituted a 120-day ban effective the following week. To minimize the impact on farm[illegible]mba products, Missouri's ban was partially lifted (http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/tennessee-joins-states-taking-action-on-dicamba-missouri-imposes-restrictions/article_17321ec6-d8ea-5f4b-87f5-69b521bb87da.html) after less than a week in effect, though heavy restrictions were pl[illegible] States such as Iowa (http://www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/crop/iowa-tracks-dicamba-drift-in[illegible]/article_2d078186-673c-11e7-a9ce-7b7b2c224a1c.html), Illinois (http://www.publicradio.org/post/dicamba-damage-estimate-tops-25-million-acres#stream/0), Kansas (http://kansaspublicradio.org/kpr-news/new-dicamba-damage-estimate-tops-25-million-acres-nationwide), Mississippi (http://[illegible]om/soybeans/target-dicamba-complaints-across-mid-so[illegible]omaha.com/money/use-of-dicamba-herbicide-draws-co[illegible]armers/article_69eb7b70-2628-5734-95ad-07[illegible] (http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/tennessee-[illegible]camba-missouri-imposes-restrictions/article_17321ec6-[illegible]html), and North Carolina (http://[illegible]s.com/soybeans/dicamba-drift-complaints-popping-[illegible]1&Issue=SEFP-01_20170706_SEFP-[illegible]cle_1&utm_rid=CPG02000003111919&utm_campaign=1849[illegible]mplaints related to dicamba. As of August 2017, [illegible] with an active dicamba ban.

Adrianne Barnes, a spokeswoman for the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, says the dicamba bans have turned into a polarizing issue for farmers because many have invested large amounts of money and time in using dicamba on their crops, while other farmers are lodging complaints with the state over dicamba allegedly destroying th[illegible]-resistant crops.

"I[illegible]n, because there are farmers that are both for and against the technology," Barnes said. "And it's something that some farmers are finding [illegible] are finding devastating. There's not a lot of gray area. So it's very [illegible] our farming community, which is a bad thing for

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As of September 21, 2017, Arkansas had received 969 complaints (https://www.aad.arkansas.gov/arkansas-dicamba-information-updates) allegedly related to di[illegible]t because the complaints are under investigation, damages cannot be [illegible]uted to dicamba until those investigations are complete. Missouri Department of Agriculture spokeswoman Sarah Alsager also referred to the 198 dicamba-related complaints the department had received as of July 19, 2017, as "a[illegible]" in [illegible]

In Arkansas, Bayer said a task force composed of farmers, scientists, and industry representatives had been created to respond to dicamba complaints. They will be tasked with finding "some answers in terms of limiting when the product can be used, in terms of in crop season; there may be larger buffer zones created, different types of nozzles [illegible] Barnes says. "So they're going to look at whether tighter re[illegible] some of the alleged damage being caused."

W[illegible] the state did enact tighter regulations, including a [illegible]a when wind speeds exceed 10 mph, or applying [illegible]pm. The state also tightened licensing requirements [illegible]ing of dicamba applications.

[illegible]e a complex issue that could be just as complicated to [illegible]

[illegible]e it creates animosity between neighboring farmers," Barnes said. "So a solution will have to be reached to put us all on the same team again."

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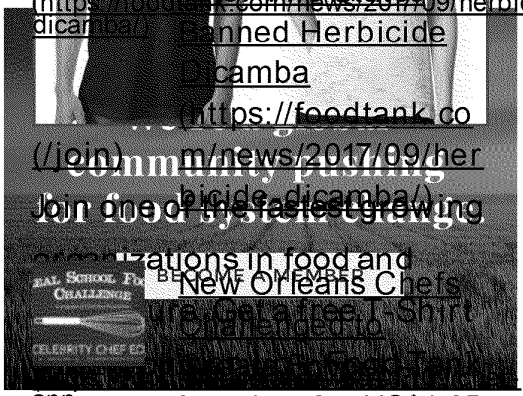

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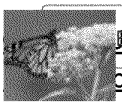

Conservationist Danielle Fox on

(https://foodtank.com/)

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After Harvey, 100+ debris dump sites pop up around town

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After Harvey, debris disposal sites have popped up around Houston. (KTRK)

By Miya Shay

Friday, September 22, 2017 07:00PM

HOUSTON, Texas (KTRK) -- Friends Howard Otis and Victor Hebert are taking a lot of pictures these days, but none of the images are pretty. Instead, they are pictures of debris truck after debris truck dropping off at the landfill across the street from their homes.

"I do remember it being a landfill," said Otis, who has lived on and off in the neighborhood near Tanner Road for years. "But I never remember it being like this."

The men are upset, they say, because the Hawthorn Landfill they live by has dramatically

things like that," said Hebert.

The reality is, the increased activity is just part of a statewide plan to speed up storm debris removal. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has established more than 100 sites across the region where Harvey hit as Temporary Debris Management Sites. Some of these locations are already landfills; others are industrial areas that can accommodate large commercial trucks. All locations are managed by local authorities.

"What happens is that the trucks go to the debris management site, [the debris] gets reduced, sometimes ground and compacted, and we take that to a final location," said Josh Stuckey, the deputy incident commander for Harris County.

Stuckey is only responsible for Harris County debris sites. The City of Houston manages dozens of additional sites. Regardless, he assures nearby residents the uptick in activity won't be forever.

"These are temporary sites, please be patient. Obviously we are there to help their neighbors right now," he said. "This helps to get the debris off their neighbors' homes as fast as possible, so please be patient."

But for Heber, the finish line can't come soon enough.

"I don't want to live there with all that mold growing," he said.

When not used as a debris site, the Hawthorne Park Landfill is normally operated by Waste Management. The company says the landfill first opened in 1994.

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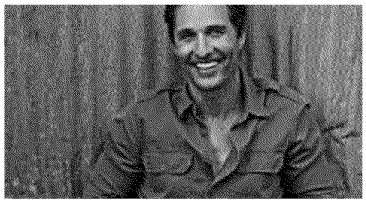
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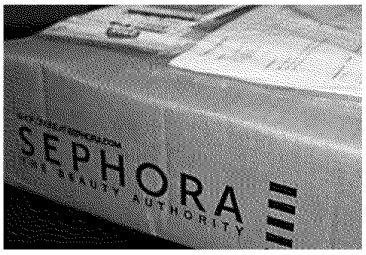

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Parts of Port Arthur under boil water notice due to water main break and low pressure

by Peter Eliopoulos

Boil Water Notice

The City of Port Arthur from Highway 73 to 4th Street between Highway 82 and Taft Ave is under an immediate boil water notice due to a water main break and subsequent loss of

pressure, according to a city spokeswoman.

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These areas include the west side of Port Arthur, Sabine Pass, Pleasure Island, and eastward to Highway 366.

The water main break happened near Savannah and 19th Street, but spokeswoman LaRisa Carpenter says it has since been ×xed.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) says a signi×cant loss of pressure could allow bacteria, viruses, and parasites grow.

Any water used for drinking, cooking, and ice making should be boiled and cooled prior to consumption, said LaRisa Carpenter.

The water should be brought to a vigorous boil for at least two minutes. Residents are also encouraged to buy bottled water for consumption.

If you experience nausea, cramps, diarrhea and/or headaches, of×cials urge residents to contact their doctor, especially those who are prone to infections.

For more information about the nature of the TCEQ violation, you can call DR. Jimmie Johnson or Donnie Stanton at 409-983-8550.

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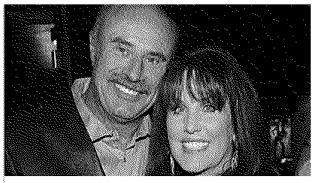

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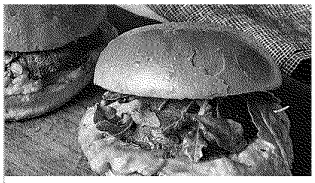

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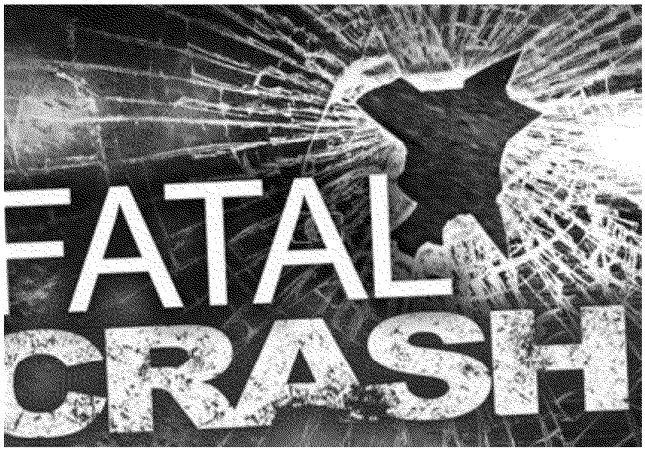

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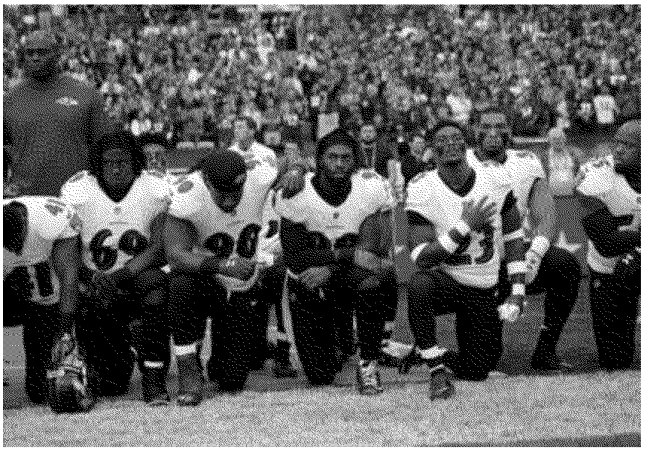

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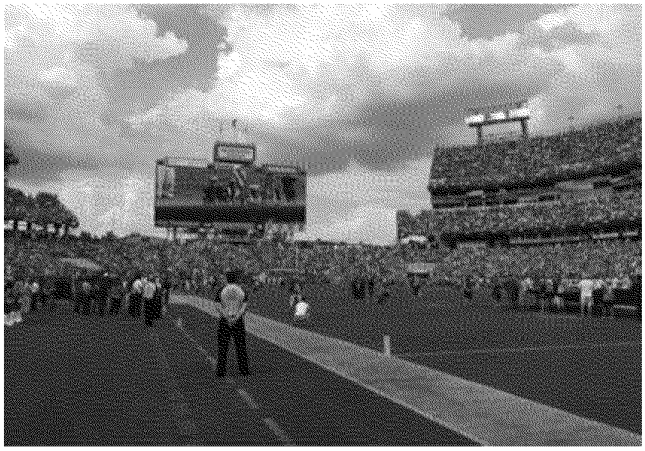

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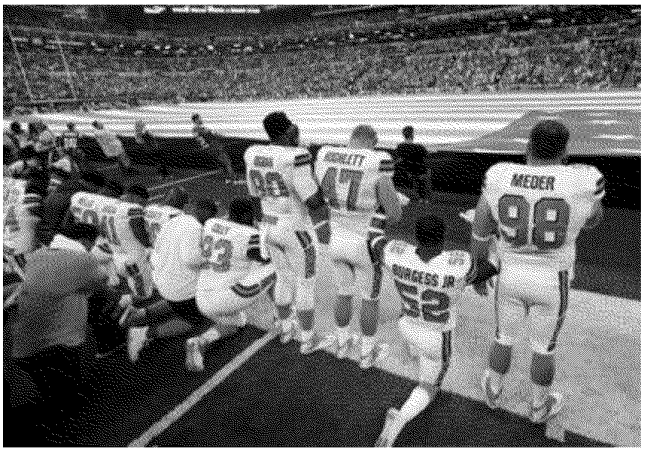

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TOP STORY

Forum to discuss proposed chemical plant in Killeen

Here's what we know, don't know

By Josh Sullivan and Julie A. Ferraro | Herald sta writers Sep 23, 2017

The groundbreaking was private for MGC Pure Chemicals America's proposed plant at the Killeen Business Park.

The public wasn't invited to the Aug. 30 event. Nor was media allowed. The Killeen Daily Herald reporter was told the media could ask questions at 11:15 a.m., after the groundbreaking, but nearly all participants were gone before 10:50 a.m. that day.

A sandbox used during the groundbreaking ceremony for the MGC Pure Chemicals America plant sits at the plant's site location in the 4500 block of Roy J. Smith Drive in Killeen, located in the Killeen Business Park, Thursday, Sept. 21, 2017.

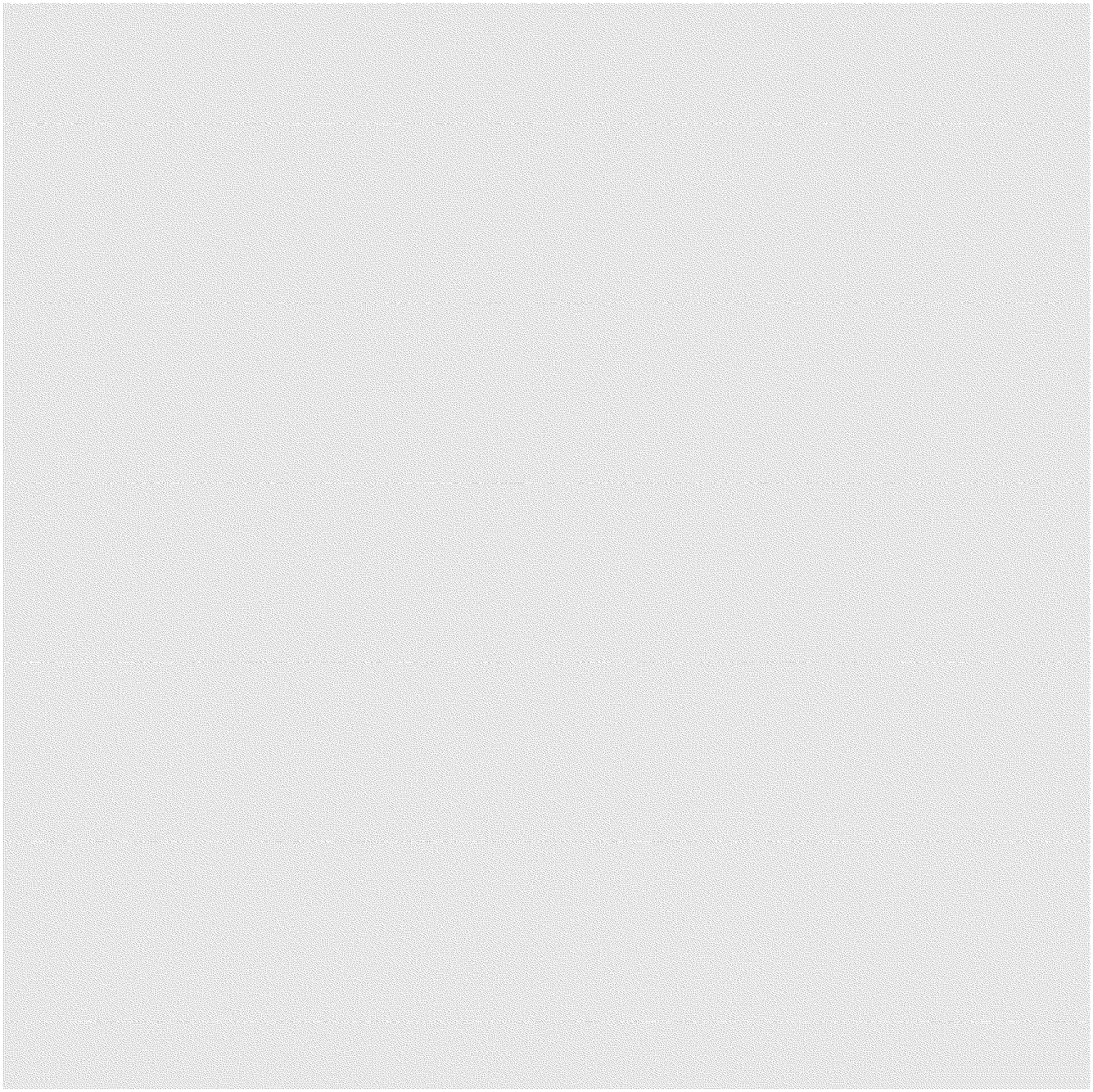
Eric J. Shelton | Herald

Since then, residents also have questions and have been peppering their city representatives, who have their own questions for MGC and the Killeen Economic Development Corporation, which signed a performance agreement with the company Aug. 2.

To facilitate communication for their constituents, City Council members Shirley Fleming and Steve Harris have organized a forum with KEDC o cials for Thursday, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Killeen Community Center, 2201 E. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

MGC PLANS

The MGC Pure Chemicals America plant would produce superpure hydrogen peroxide, a cleaning chemical used in the semiconductor industry. This is used to produce several everyday items, such as camera lenses on phones and tablets.



An artist's rendition shows what the MGC Pure Chemicals America plant will look like upon completion.
Courtesy

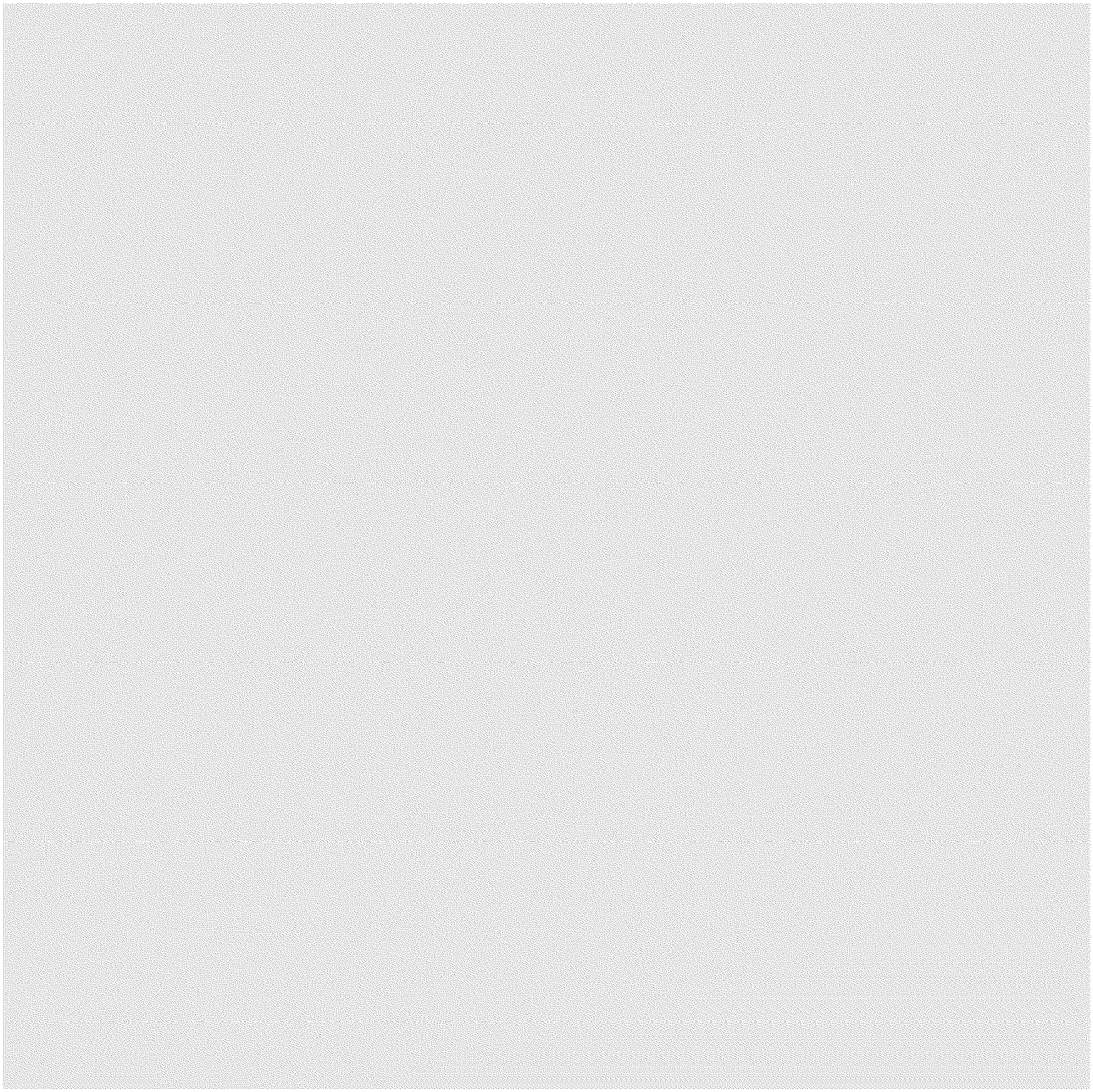
Hydrogen peroxide, sulfuric acid and sodium hydroxide will be used and stored at the plant, said MGC spokesman Scott Hancock.

MGC's "practice is to keep limited amounts of chemicals on hand," Hancock said in an email Thursday. "In order not to cause damage to the surrounding area, our plant is designed to be in compliance with all legal requirements as well as utilizing best practices which have been cultivated during our long time in this business."

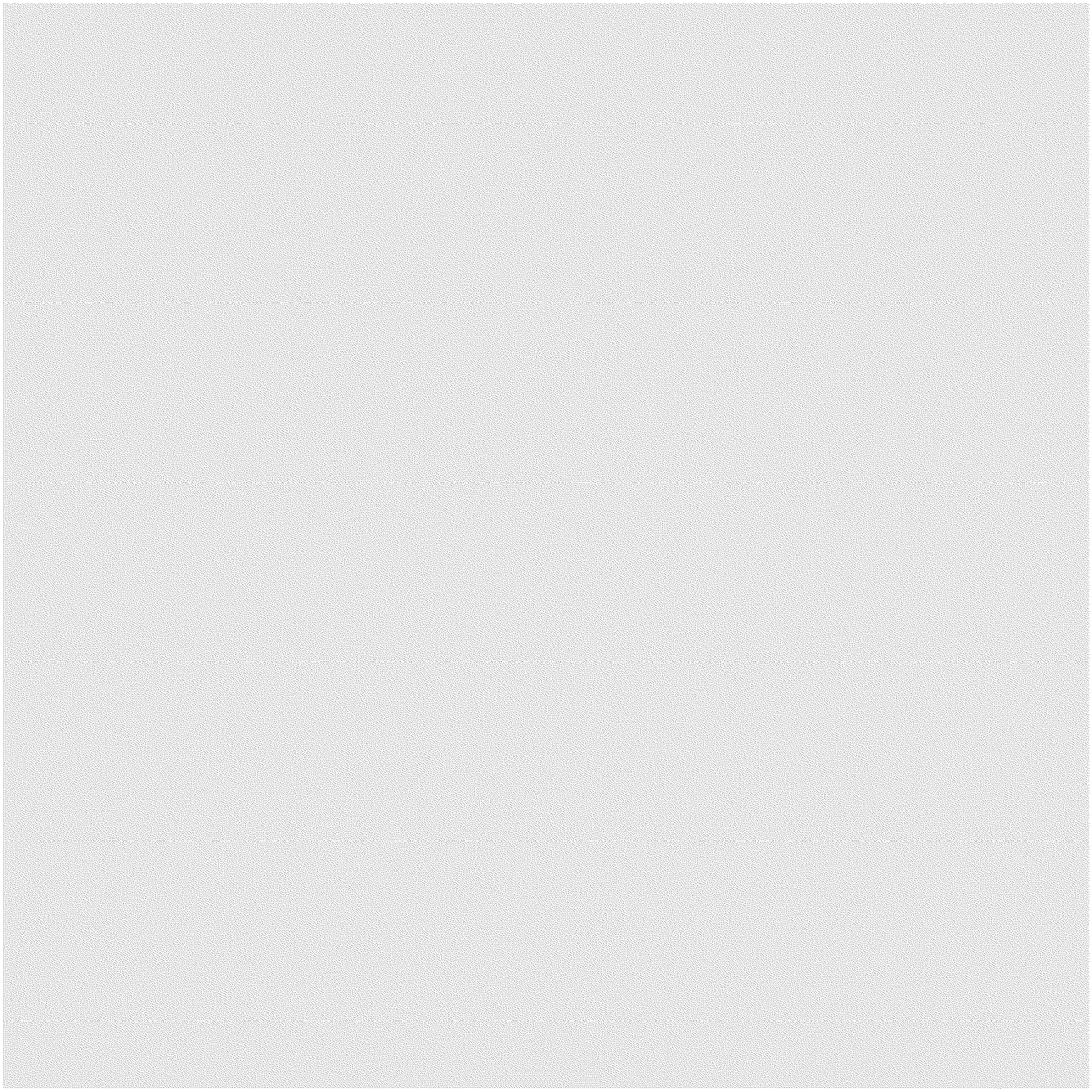
RESIDENTS' CONCERNS

Fleming and Harris have heard a barrage of concerns from constituents, many alarmed about an Arkema company plant re in Crosby in the Houston area. At that plant, organic peroxides used to make paint, plastics and other products, caught re and created fumes that rst responders and residents blamed for sickening them. The chemical compounds caught re when power was knocked out during Hurricane Harvey, cutting o the refrigeration used to store the chemicals, according to news reports.

"There's no guarantee that something like in Houston can't happen to us here," Fleming said.



Fire Burns at Crosby, Texas Chemical Plant



Smoke rises from a chemical plant in Crosby, near Houston, Texas, Friday, Sept. 1, 2017. Thick black smoke and towering orange ames shot up Friday from the ooded Houston-area chemical plant after two trailers of highly unstable compounds blew up a day earlier after losing refrigeration. Arkema says Harvey's oodwaters engulfed its backup generators and knocked out the refrigeration necessary to keep it's nine containers of organic peroxides from degrading and catching re. (KTRK via AP)

TEL

Vivian Perry is one of those concerned about safety. She lives about a mile from the proposed plant.

"It's got so many questions, you know?" she said in a phone call Monday. "I used to live around Galveston, where they have the petroleum chemical companies; I'm familiar with things like that, and I'd hate to think about it going so close to a residential area and schools and stu like that."

The River Oaks Apartments are less than a mile from the plant's expected site. Killeen High School is about two miles from the site.

MGC has one plant in the United States. The Mesa, Arizona, plant is 1.4 miles from a neighborhood, and 6.5 miles from the nearest school. Surrounding the plant is a Fuji Im Electronics plant, a Bridgestone Biorubber Process Research Center and a tire drop-o area, among other buildings.

"Plants of this nature often locate in industrial/business parks zoned for manufacturing as is the Killeen Business Park," said KEDC Executive Director John Crutch eld in an email Wednesday.

WHY KILLEEN?

Part of the reasons o cials at MGC were drawn to Killeen was an incentive-laden performance agreement — potentially over $1.7 million — o ered by the Killeen EDC.

The $540,144 piece of land, 12.4 acres, at the Killeen Business Park would be given to MGC at no cost, Crutch eld said, because it is already owned by KEDC. The company later would be given an option on additional land, up to 15.78 acres, worth $36,618 per acre. The dollar amounts on the land were listed in the agreement.

KEDC also will reimburse up to $486,000 of MGC's property tax payments.

KEDC would reimburse MGC for up to $500,000 in infrastructure improvements that could include rail spur development, roads and utility lines at the site.

The KEDC will fund a job creation grant of up to $224,000. That means MGC would get $8,000 for each full-time position.

KEDC will ask the city to waive an estimate $20,000 in permitting fees for MGC or it would reimburse MGC “should the city of Killeen fail to do so for any reason.”

KEDC would pay closing costs of up to $10,000 and the cost of subdividing the site.

MGC OBLIGATIONS

MGC would construct a 20,000-square-foot chemical manufacturing plant within 24 months of signing the performance agreement. MGC signed it July 26, and KEDC signed it Aug. 2.

MGC must make a capital investment of at least $23.1 million in real property, furniture, xtures and equipment.

MGC must hire and retain 28 employees in ve years. The rst year the chemical plant will be in operation, it will be required to have three full-time positions, and each will pay an average salary of $66,000 a year. The agreement said that number will increase to 20 full-time positions with the same average salary in year two, and remain the same for year three. By the fth year the plant is in operation, there should be 28 full-time positions. Each full-time position can be split into two, part-time positions that also meet the required 40-hour week and 52 weeks a year schedule.

WATER, OTHER NEEDS

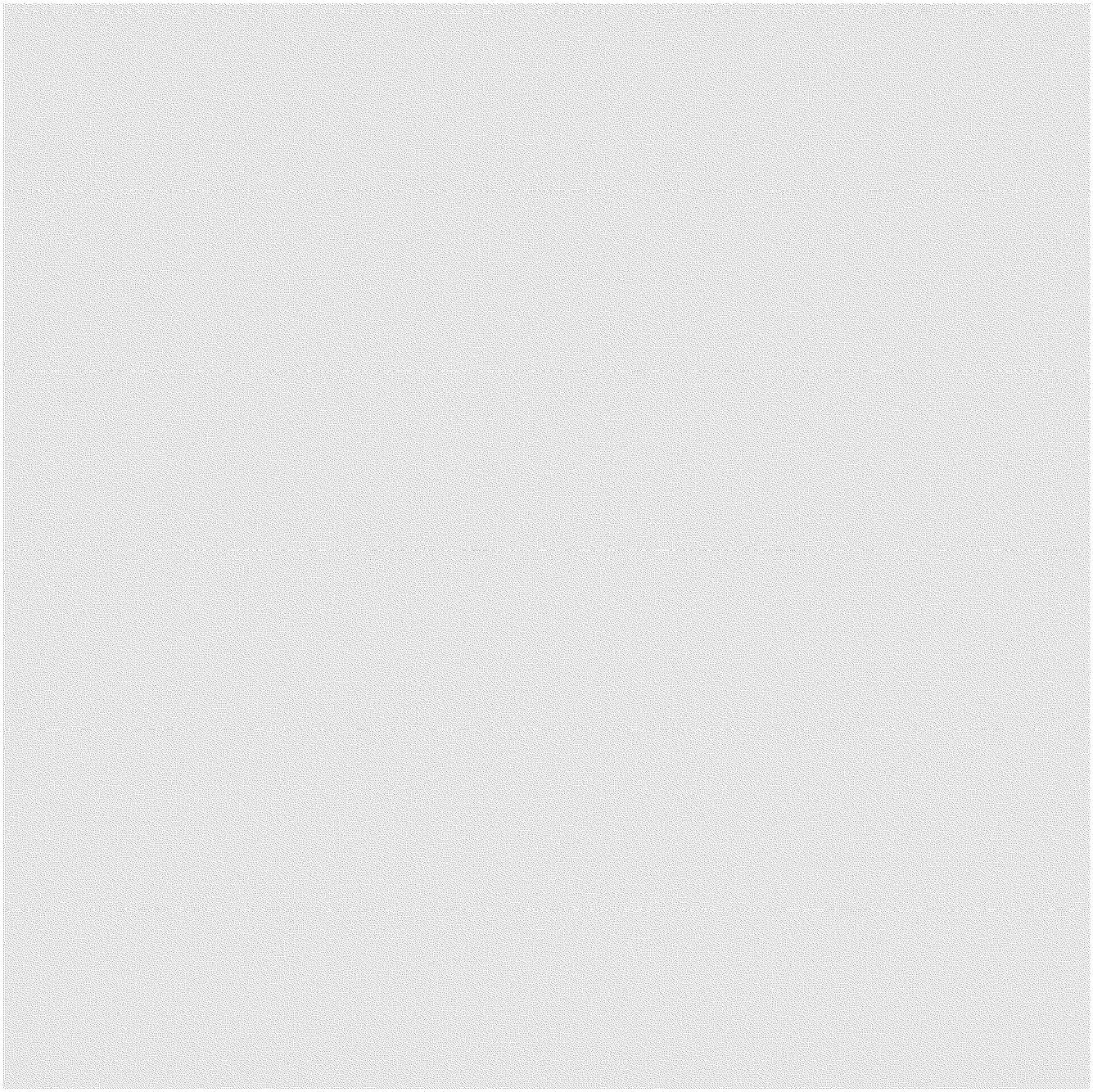
Killeen city spokeswoman Hilary Shine said there is currently no water usage agreement between the city and MGC. However, Killeen o cials have considered the company's estimated water needs and determined there is "adequate capacity in the current system to support those needs."

When the plant is fully operational, it is expected to use about 3 million gallons of water a month, according to MGC's Hancock. Waste that streams to the city's sewers will be mostly water, and will be treated for potential hydrogen before it is discharged.

During the construction permitting process, MGC is required to submit proof of compliance with state and federal emission standards. There will be no intentional emissions released from the plant, Hancock said.

There is currently no documentation on air or water permits, according to Crutch eld. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the city of Killeen are the agencies MGC will have to go through during the permitting process.

MGC has led a notice of intent for stormwater discharges associated with construction activity with the TCEQ, according to Hancock.



The Killeen Business Park, where the the MGC Pure Chemicals America plant site is expected to be located, is seen Thursday, Sept. 21, 2017.

Eric J. Shelton | Herald

Permits are necessary for any toxic emissions, and MGC has not led an application for those permits, according to Andrew Keese, media relations specialist for TCEQ.

"The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality does not have a pending permit application for MGC Pure Chemicals or Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Company in Killeen," Keese said as of Wednesday.

A lot depends on what MGC actually proposes, Keese added, as to which permits the chemical plant will need.

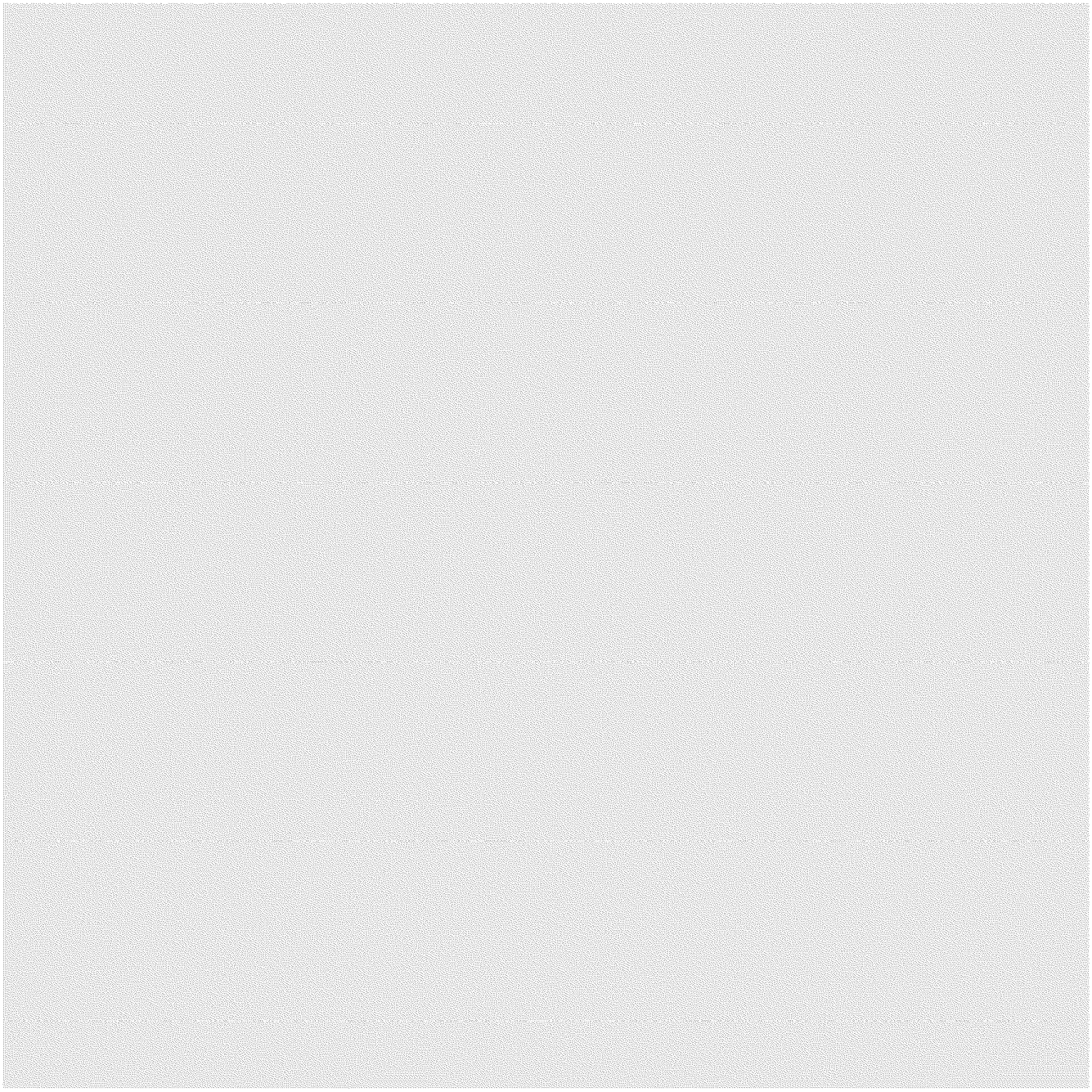
The potential for a rail spur is mentioned in the KEDC agreement with MGC. A call to the Texas Department of Transportation Rail Safety Program regarding regulation of transporting potentially hazardous chemicals received no response.

According to the TxDOT website, TxDOT rail safety investigators monitor compliance with state and federally mandated safety regulations in the areas of hazardous materials.

The TxDOT o ers a "Hazardous Materials Toolkit" on its website. "The presence or suspected presence of hazardous material with the potential to in uence a transportation project creates a multitude of problems a ecting right-of-way acquisition, project development and construction," is how the website describes the purpose of the Toolkit.

MESA PLANT

In Mesa, Arizona, where MGC Pure Chemicals America has its headquarters, the local re department deals with a number of industrial facilities using chemicals in that area, including MGC.



MGC Pure Chemicals America opened its rst plant in Mesa, Arizona. The Killeen location will be its second. Courtesy

John Locklin, deputy chief of re prevention for the Mesa Fire and Medical Department could not provide any speci c information on MGC's Mesa plant, as he had no access to that information.

"Generally, these places have a lot of OSHA requirements," Locklin said.

There are also state agencies, like the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, which have oversight of the plants.

Some of the requirements, according to Locklin, are handling, storage and backup systems and industrial sprinkler systems.

When a new plant is built, Locklin explained, it's traditional for the local hazardous material response team to do a walk-through, in order to familiarize themselves with the chemicals and layout of the building.

The plants also have an on-site emergency response team, to handle any small incidents, Locklin added. "They will have things happen, and will handle them and not tell us."

That is because the regulations allow for incidents involving what Locklin termed a "lower reportable quantity" to be dealt with in-house.

If something occurs at the plant that exceeds those quantities, the Mesa hazmat team responds.

KEDC FUNDING

35 percent of city funds and 65 percent of nontaxpayer funds.

In 2016: 2 cents for every 75 cents property tax income.

Killeen EDC's 2016 budget: $748,058 of revenues from the city's funding formula.

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Headlines

NMSU faculty, students use weather balloons to test ozone levels

Date: 09/22/2017

Writer: Kristie Garcia, 575-646-4211, kmgarcia@nmsu.edu

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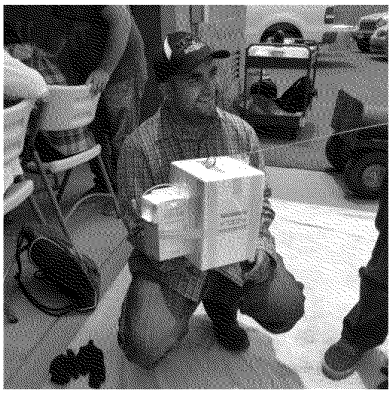
Students at New Mexico State University are getting hands-on experience launching weather balloons to test ozone levels in the area.

New Mexico State Climatologist Dave DuBois from the NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, is the principal investigator on the project, which is part of a larger project initiated by the State of Texas.

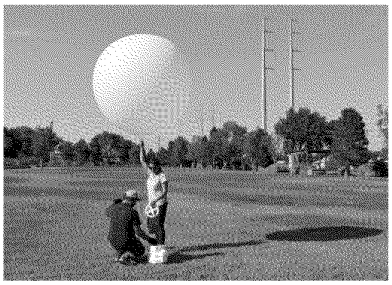


New Mexico State University environmental science undergraduate student Octavio Nayares holds an ozonesonde - an instrument attached to a weather balloon that records and sends data back to the ground. NMSU faculty and students are launching the weather balloons as part of a project with the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. (Photo by Dave DuBois)

Along with a combined 10 students from the University of Texas at El Paso and St. Edward's University in Austin, about six NMSU students are launching the weather balloons near El Paso, Texas, and Santa Teresa, New Mexico.

DuBois said the students have taken on quite of bit of responsibility.

"Just by doing the field work, there is a huge sense of teamwork and individual responsibility," DuBois said. "The students are also learning the science part of it. We're looking at the atmosphere and learning about how things change, and we're looking at ozone and why it's important. We're also measuring the weather on a day-to-day basis and observing it on the ground, all the way up to the stratosphere."



New Mexico State University environmental science undergraduate student Octavio Nayares (kneeling) and environmental science graduate student Zahra Ghodsi Zadeh (standing) prepare to launch a weather balloon with an ozone level sensor attached. NMSU faculty and students are launching the weather balloons as part of a project with the El Paso Metropolitan Planning

DuBois, who is an associate college professor in the NMSU Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, said he expects to have launched 57 balloons by the end of September. The project began in May. The balloons are equipped with sensors that measure levels of ozone.

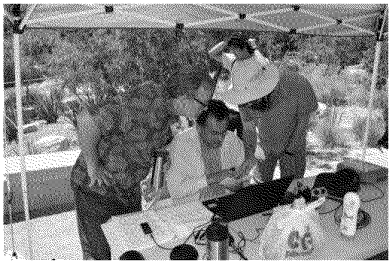
"Ozone is an air pollutant regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and it's the cause of many respiratory illnesses and deaths across the world," DuBois said. "We are working to understand the causes of ozone in El Paso. The sensors attached to the balloons send data back to us regarding the concentration of ozone while the balloon is in the air."

Organization and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. (Photo by Dave DuBois)

Each balloon ascends as high as 30 kilometers into the stratosphere before it pops and falls to the earth with a parachute.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality provides funding to the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization, which contracted NMSU to conduct the ozone-measuring part of the project.

Michael DeAntonio, a college professor in the NMSU Department of Physics, is the field coordinator for the weather balloon launches. Along with DuBois and DeAntonio, NMSU students from the Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, the New Mexico Climate Center, the Department of Physics and the Klipsch School of Electrical and Computer Engineering are working on the project. St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, along with students from the University of Texas El Paso, are also partners in the project.



New Mexico State University Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences assistant professor Dave DuBois (center) is the principal investigator on a project that uses weather balloons to test ozone levels. NMSU Department of Physics college associate professor Michael DeAntonio (left) is the field coordinator. St. Edward's University natural sciences research assistant Mark Spychala (right) is also part of the project. (Photo by Gary Morris of St. Edwards University)

"The students are able to see the values change as the balloon rises," DuBois said. "The balloon goes up about five meters per second, and it takes about an hour to go about 30 kilometers – or about 80,000 feet, which is higher than an airplane – before it comes down. If the students are available, they can retrieve the sensor."

DuBois and his team plot the latitude and longitude of each sensor on Google Earth. If the location is accessible, the sensor is retrieved. When it lands in the desert or on farmland, it's more accessible. However, some have landed in Mexico, high up in the Organ Mountains and as far as Artesia, New Mexico. Even if the sensor is not retrieved, the necessary data is collected in real time.

In the event someone from the general public finds a sensor and the shredded balloon, DuBois has attached a phone number, as well as a note in English and Spanish that indicates the device is not dangerous.

"We have a Google phone number set up, so people can immediately call and it goes directly to my cell phone," he said. "I also tape a letter to the top that goes into detail about what we're doing."

Researchers are looking at many factors – including possible pollution from Mexico and Canada – that may contribute to air quality in the United States. Wildfires nearby and in the Pacific Northwest may factor in as well. The oil and gas industry, both on land and in the Gulf of Mexico, may play a part. Even distant locations, such San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, Tucson and Los Angeles may contribute. Because the balloons travel so high up, air masses from that far away may be tracked.

These factors are all just hypotheses at this point. Once all the data is complete, DuBois and his team will begin analyzing the results.

"The goal is to help El Paso make choices regarding efforts toward local emission controls, city planning, fuel for automobiles and transit," DuBois said. "There are dozens of options to change an area like El Paso. If they try to change the patterns of the pollution and change the timing, hopefully the ozone would be affected."

DuBois said this project gives the students a sense of accomplishment.

"We actually see the numbers come in, email the numbers out to get the data quality assured, and then we get it back the same day," he said. "The students also have to prepare the instruments, which takes a couple of hours. Then they actually see the balloon launch and come back down. They have a lot of ownership in the data now, and they've worked very hard."

The students will present their findings of this project at a conference in Austin in January.

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NMSU - All About Discovery!

AP

By MICHAEL BIESECKER
Sep. 21, 2017

https://ww

Classified information
Executive branch
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More from

WASHINGTON (AP) — Employees at the Environmental Protection Agency are attending mandatory training sessions this week to reinforce their compliance with laws and rules against leaking classified or sensitive government information.

It is part of a broader Trump administration order for anti-leaks training at all executive branch agencies. The Associated Press obtained training materials from the hourlong class.

Government employees who hold security clearances undergo background checks and extensive training in safeguarding classified information. Relatively few EPA employees deal with classified files, but the new training also reinforces requirements to keep "Controlled Unclassified Information" from unauthorized disclosure.

The EPA occasionally creates, receives, handles and stores classified material because of its homeland security, emergency response and continuity missions. EPA employees also work closely with contractors and other federal agencies that more regularly handle classified information.

President Donald Trump has expressed anger repeated leaks of potentially embarrassing information to media organizations in recent months.

In a speech last month, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said those responsible for the "staggering number of leaks" coming out of the administration would be investigated and potentially prosecuted.

"We share the White House's concern with the unlawful leaks throughout the government," Justice Department spokesman Ian Prior said Wednesday.

EPA officials did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment Thursday.

A three-page fact sheet sent to EPA employees as part of the training warned that leaks of even unclassified information could have serious consequences to national security.

"Enemies of the United States are relentless in their pursuit of information which they can exploit to harm US interests," the document said.

The document recounted past circumstances where government secrets had been spilled either through espionage, computer hacks or leaks to reporters.

The examples included the 1980s spying case involving CIA counter-intelligence officer Aldrich Ames on behalf of the Soviets and a 1972 leak to columnist Jack Anderson about spying on members of the Soviet Politburo, which he disclosed in The Washington Post.

The sheet also cited the 2015 hack of computers at the Office of Personnel Management, a data breach that compromised the names, Social Security numbers, birthdates and home addresses and other sensitive personal information for 18 million people.

EPA staff was reminded of the whistleblower protections afforded to federal employees who expose wrongdoing. The training materials directed them to do so through proper channels for reporting fraud, waste and abuse, including the inspector general's hotline.

—

Associated Press reporters Seth Borenstein and Sadie Gurman in Washington, and Darlene Superville in New York contributed.

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