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DEQ's Water Permits Division issues pesticides pamphlet

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's Water Permits Division has authored a pesticides pamphlet that is currently available. The pamphlet will be distributed for the first time at the Environmental Regulatory Compliance Conference (ERCC), which will be held at the Riverfront Center in Alexandria on January 25 and 26, 2012. The pamphlet contains a brief summary of the LPDES Pesticides General Permit including frequently asked questions regarding the discharges covered by the permit.

Administered under the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) program, the Pesticides General Permit went into effect on October 31, 2011. The permit pertains to discharges associated with the use of pesticides as it relates to mosquito and flying insect pest control, aquatic weed and algae control, aquatic nuisance animal control and forest canopy pest control.

The permit applies to commercial applicators as well as facilities that are not covered by a current LPDES permit, such as state, parish and local pest control authorities, mosquito control districts, DOTD roadside weed control units and utility/rights-of-way outfits.

The federal Clean Water Act prohibits any point source discharge of a pollutant to waters of the United States unless the discharge complies with certain sections of the Act. Point sources are defined as "discrete conveyances, including, but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel or conduit from which pollutants are or may be discharged."

The requirement to obtain LPDES permits for point source discharges of applied pesticides stems from a 2009 decision by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. In that decision, the court ruled that any pesticides undergoing a point source discharge to state waters require an LPDES permit.

"This pamphlet should answer virtually all regulatory questions and concerns regarding safe pesticide use for facilities and applicators engaging in the discharge of pesticides," said Mitch Mitchell, Administrator of DEQ's Water Permits Division. "While there are a host of potential environmental impacts related to pesticides, the proper use of pesticides is a key factor in reducing those impacts. The Pesticides General Permit contains specific guidelines that ensure for regulatory compliance."

Facilities and users must apply pesticides in accordance with guidelines listed on the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) label and control discharges in accordance with the LPDES Pesticides General Permit. Additionally, certification and licensing must comply with DEQ and Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry regulations.

For more information, please go to:

www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=rM_VTc2qjS8%3d&tabid=63.