



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ requires payment of more than \$2,780,000 in penalties, funding for Beneficial Environmental Projects**

**BATON ROUGE** – Over the past year, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has required payment of more than \$2,780,000 in penalties and funding for Beneficial Environmental Projects throughout the state.

DEQ regulates state industry through a permitting process which sets parameters for industry on the amount and degree of emissions they may discharge or dispose of, along with specific operational guidelines. After permits are issued, inspectors from DEQ's Office of Environmental Compliance inspect the facilities to ensure that they are meeting those requirements. DEQ Inspection and Assessment Division personnel also respond to citizen complaints and concerns, industry self-reported incidents and environmental emergencies. When appropriate, DEQ issues enforcement actions for environmental noncompliance and permit violations.

With more than 1,803 enforcement actions for Louisiana, environmental violators were required to spend more than \$2,494,431 in cash, settlements and stipulated penalties, while agreeing to more than \$295,250 in Beneficial Environmental Projects designed to benefit the environment and communities in 2011. The Beneficial Environmental Projects included \$45,000 to the city of Gretna for environmental training; \$20,000 to the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program; funds to plant 25 bald Cypress Trees at Fountainbleau State Park in Mandeville; and \$225,000 to West Baton Rouge Parish for a Mobile Command Center.

“In Louisiana, enforcement actions are one of the tools used to ensure environmental protection,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “While we have instituted educational compliance courses and provided more regional assistance to industry throughout the state, there are still times when enforcement actions are needed.”

DEQ shares environmental enforcement authority for regulated businesses and industry with EPA in many cases. Through close coordination, the agencies work together to focus on enforcement actions which bring about the most environmental benefit. Often, these investigations and actions are brought by both federal and state agencies. EPA and its partnering state agencies also bring separate environment enforcement cases as part of our shared annual planning efforts. DEQ also has an active Criminal Investigation Division that investigates environmental crimes.

More information can be found on the DEQ Web site: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/>.