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DEQ's Water Permits Division exceeds regional and national goals for FY 2012

BATON ROUGE – Based on a recent review by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Water Permits Division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality exceeded the EPA's Performance Partnership Grant goals for major, minor and priority permits in Federal Fiscal Year 2012, which ended on Sept. 30, 2012.

Major water permits are those with design flows generally greater than one million gallons per day. Those under the one million gallon per day flow are generally classified as minor permits, and priority permits are those that are targeted by EPA and DEQ for immediate issuance due to expiration dates, emergency environmental events or other extenuating circumstances.

During the last annual fiscal year period, the division was required by EPA to issue 31 major permits, 196 minor permits and 19 priority permits. For the third consecutive year, DEQ's Water Permits Division exceeded national and regional water permit issuance goals. This year the division coordinated, wrote and issued 32 major permits, 204 minor permits and 42 priority permits.

Over this period, the division also attained a 100 percent issuance level for major and minor permits (including non-stormwater general permits). DEQ's Water Permits Division has maintained the 100 percent mark for nine consecutive months. This is by far the highest rate of any state in EPA Region 6 and one of the highest levels nationwide.

“Overall, DEQ's Water Permits Division has been working steadily to meet our annual requirements, and now we have been able to excel by attaining 100 percent of the issuance goals as stipulated by EPA headquarters. This took lots of hard work by our staff, and we are on course to continue meeting those goals in the next fiscal year,” said Mitch Mitchell, Administrator of DEQ's Water Permits Division.

“These results are excellent,” said Claudia Hosch, Associate Director of EPA Region 6 Water Quality Protection Division. “It demonstrates that the staff in Louisiana has worked hard to achieve the established goals, has a good program and is a leader nationally and within Region 6.”