



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

PEGGY M. HATCH
SECRETARY

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Contact: Tim Beckstrom
Phone: 225-219-3967

Iberville Parish man pleads guilty to illegal dumping of pollutants

BATON ROUGE – Yesterday, an Iberville Parish man pled guilty to violations of Louisiana’s Water Control Law and the Environmental Quality Act in state district court.

Tommy M. Francise, 56, of Plaquemine, illegally dumped wastes, glycerin and grease into a drainage canal behind his residence on Talbot Drive in Plaquemine.

During the execution of a search warrant in April 2010, investigators with the Iberville Parish Sheriff’s Office and DEQ’s Criminal Investigation Division observed a large area of soil contaminated with grease at the rear of Francise’s residence. Investigators found two locations where used cooking oil was being discharged into the canal from a biodiesel production operation at the residence. Hoses, connected to biodiesel containers, were found leading to a drainage canal behind Francise’s residence. The drainage canal was contaminated with grease, and vegetation near the production area and in the drainage canal was destroyed.

Further inspection at the site revealed a large pile of burned solid waste near the processing area, which also contained several 55 gallon drums of Methanol. Household garbage, wood, cans, plastic, metal, glass, pipe, nails and concrete were also found around the residence. Based upon the findings in the inspection, Francise was arrested by DEQ-CID investigators on April 23, 2010.

“DEQ will continue to fully investigate any illegal dumping activity and prosecute anyone found to be involved,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “Every Louisiana citizen should take personal pride in maintaining and preserving our unique natural environment for today as well as for future generations. We ask that anyone having knowledge of illegal dumping activity should contact the DEQ immediately. Notifications can be anonymous and we welcome any assistance from the public in order to bring violators to justice.”

In accepting Francise’s plea, the Honorable Alvin J. Batiste, Jr. ordered Francise to pay a \$2,500 fine and reimburse the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality in the amount of \$2,700 for the cost of investigation. Batiste sentenced Francise to three years of probation. Francise was also ordered to clean up the property in accordance with DEQ regulations and submit to random inspections.

The case was prosecuted by District Attorney Ricky Ward and Assistant District Attorney Scott Stassi.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.