



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **First set of NORM samples in Assumption Parish show no detectable levels**

**BATON ROUGE** – Readings from monitoring equipment indicated there were no detectable levels for naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) on the surface of a slurry hole in Assumption Parish. Scientists from the Department of Environmental Quality began executing a sampling plan today.

The first part of the plan called for the use of handheld monitoring devices in an effort to detect any real-time levels of NORM. NORM is present in the earth's crust and reaches the surface through activities like oil and gas exploration or mining. It can also reach the surface through natural processes.

DEQ scientists went to the slurry hole today in an airboat supplied by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to take readings using equipment designed to measure levels of radiation. A scientist surveyed the entire slurry hole via airboat while monitoring with the equipment. At no point were there any detectable levels. NORM readings were taken on the 15 water samples that were collected yesterday and there were no levels above background.

Scientists today also took four water samples and a soil sample which will be sent to the lab for more detailed analysis. Those results will be back early next week, as DEQ has asked the lab to provide expedited analysis.

“This is good news,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “Based on the first round of data, we are confident that the potential exposure of citizens to NORM is not a problem in this matter. We will continue to provide data based on air and water sampling to Assumption Parish and DNR.”