



Media contacts: R6Press@epa.gov or Press@epa.gov

EPA Supports Water System Recovery in Louisiana Communities Affected by Hurricane Laura

DALLAS - (Sept. 4, 2020) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has deployed resources and staff to communities in Louisiana dealing with drinking water and wastewater system outages during the recovery from Hurricane Laura. This support comes in response to the Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) requests to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which then gave EPA the assignments.

LDH and LDEQ are conducting assessments of drinking water and wastewater systems in Louisiana, respectively, and reporting their findings to EPA, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is doing the same for systems in Texas. Drinking water systems remain heavily impacted in both states, with many systems not operating at all or operating with restrictions such as boil advisories and conservation measures. Please refer to each state agency's website for the most up-to-date information on water systems.

Upon receiving a mission assignment from FEMA, EPA dispatched four subject-matter experts in drinking water and wastewater to assist FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These teams will coordinate joint evaluations with LDH for drinking water and with LDEQ for wastewater. EPA also deployed a mobile drinking water lab from the Region 7 headquarters in Lenexa, Kansas. The lab is certified to perform bacteriological analysis among other types of analyses. The mobile lab and support staff arrived in Lake Charles on September 3 to assist with processing drinking water samples for bacteria and residual chlorine.

EPA continues to support FEMA, state, local, and tribal partners in response to Hurricane Laura. EPA's Region 6 headquarters office in Dallas is taking action to ensure Superfund sites are secure following the storm, to assist public drinking water systems with rapid assessments, and to seamlessly integrate emergency response activities with Texas, Louisiana, and other federal response agencies. EPA encourages affected communities to continue staying alert for instructions from local authorities. Additional information about EPA's efforts can be found at <https://response.epa.gov/hurricanelaura>

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