



For Immediate Release

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LDEQ and U.S. Department of Defense Formulate Innovative New Partnership

Baton Rouge, Louisiana — September 19, 2024: The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) hosted the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) for the Louisiana Military Environmental Alliance Summit in August, marking a significant milestone in our state’s environmental and military collaboration efforts.

At the summit, LDEQ Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto read a Letter of Intent expressing the agency’s interest in establishing the Louisiana Military Environmental Alliance (LMEA). This new partnership aims to advance environmental restoration on Louisiana’s military and National Guard properties — addressing critical issues of environmental contamination and ecosystem restoration to ensure the lands are viable and available for military readiness and operations. The group also explored next-generation energy opportunities that would provide cleaner alternative sources to support DOD in Louisiana.



Summit attendees listen to a presentation on current DOD missions in Louisiana.

“Louisiana holds significant U.S. military assets that are crucial to national and global security,” said LDEQ Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto. “By creating the Louisiana Environmental Military Alliance, we are taking a bold step to ensure these lands are restored to support our brave women and men who proudly serve our country.”

LDEQ protects and preserves the state's natural resources, ensuring that contaminated sites are appropriately managed, remediated and restored. The agency collaborates with federal agencies, including DOD, to align state environmental efforts with national regulations and goals.

The U.S. Department of Defense holds a significant footprint in our state. In FY 2022 alone, Louisiana received \$3.3 billion in Federal Defense spending — 1.4% of the state's total GDP. Historically, the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) and Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program have provided essential funding and support for state and other non-DOD agencies to assess, restore and preserve habitats that intersect with military missions. From FY 2010 through FY 2023, DOD invested more than \$12.3 million in Louisiana through its REPI projects supporting two installations: Fort Johnson and Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

Leveraging existing programs like REPI, DERP, the Army Compatible Use Buffer, and others — and collaborating with the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation — through LMEA would be instrumental in facilitating the cleanup of contaminated sites while safeguarding military installations' continued operational readiness and sustainability. Under LMEA, all DOD-managed and State-owned National Guard lands, which total over 280,000 acres, would be evaluated to identify areas most in need of restoration — including Fort Polk, Barksdale Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Camp Beauregard, and National Guard training areas and support facilities throughout the state.

The summit resulted in a number of important achievements, including:

- **Intent to Establish LMEA:** LMEA would be the first alliance of its kind, uniting state and federal agencies to mitigate environmental hazards, restore ecosystems and ensure safe reuse of military lands in the state.
- **Pledge to Hold Annual Summit by LDEQ:** The ideas presented through an open dialogue of each parties' resources produced creative measures for restoration of lands and sharing of assets and expertise, and a commitment to hold an annual summit will create an atmosphere to continue this exchange and dialogue.
- **Dual Commitment to Goals:** LDEQ and DOD are setting the stage for enhanced cooperation by utilizing existing frameworks and joining forces to explore new opportunities, which will help to ensure these lands continue to serve our armed forces for national and global security.

"The Department of Defense truly appreciates this unique opportunity to strengthen our relationships with LDEQ through the planning of the Louisiana Military Environmental Alliance, as it allows us all to accelerate progress toward our common goals," said Michael Ackerman, U.S. Air Force Regional Environmental Coordinator.



Sec. Giacometto, Michael Ackerman, U.S. Air Force, David Carr, U.S. Army, and summit attendees commemorate the day's efforts.

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