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LDEQ Approves Use of Unmanned Aircraft for Visual Tank Inspections

Baton Rouge, LA — The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has approved the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) — commonly known as drones — to conduct visual inspections of aboveground tanks, as required under LAC 33:III.2103.D.2.e. This advancement is expected to significantly reduce inspection costs for industry while improving their safety and efficiency.

The integration of drone technology into semiannual tank inspections has the potential to save Louisiana's regulated community an estimated \$4 million annually by reducing the need for traditional methods such as scaffolding, cranes or manned access equipment. In addition to cost savings, drone use minimizes worker risk and enables more timely identification and response to potential environmental concerns.

LDEQ recommends that all unmanned aircraft used for regulatory inspections meet specific standards to ensure image clarity and secure operation. While not mandatory, the agency encourages the use of unmanned aircraft from the U.S. Department of Defense's Blue UAS list for enhanced cybersecurity. Drone systems should meet or exceed the following technical specifications:



- **Sensor:** 4/3" CMOS
- **Effective Megapixels:** 20 MP
- **Video Resolution:** 4K at 3840x2160 / 24fps
- **Video Bitrate:** H.264 / H.265 at 200 Mbps
- **Controller Display Resolution:** 1920x1080
- **Display Brightness:** 1000 nits
- **Screen Size:** 5.5"

“The use of unmanned aircraft for industry inspections represents a major step forward in Louisiana’s adoption of innovative environmental solutions,” **Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Compliance Jerry Lang said.** “This approach helps ensure that inspections are conducted more safely, more efficiently and with the high level of quality that protects the public and the environment.”

For more information on inspection standards or drone recommendations, visit www.deq.louisiana.gov.

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