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LDEQ moves to suspend debris burning

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is taking action to curtail open burning at hurricane debris sites while a statewide burn ban is in effect. Citing “extraordinary” fire threat conditions, the agency issued amendments to emergency declarations for four weather events that allow parish debris sites to open burn some vegetative debris.

The four amended declarations are for Hurricane Ida (2021), Hurricane Laura (2020), Hurricane Delta (2020), and the severe weather outbreak (tornadoes) of June 2023. The open burning is part of the authorized disposal of storm-generated waste that is outlined in emergency declarations issued after the weather events. That authorization to open burn debris will be suspended until Sept. 20, 2023.

“The unprecedented dry conditions across the state have to be acknowledged,” LDEQ Secretary Roger Gingles said. “And the burn ban issued by State Fire Marshal Dan Wallis is clear: no open burning is safe.”

Any currently effective approvals to open burn have been suspended through Sept. 20. The emergency orders are issued for a set period then reissued or amended if the debris work is unfinished. Other debris burning authorizations that are not part of the emergency orders have also been suspended.

Wallis and Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain issued the statewide burn ban Aug. 7 in response to “extremely dry conditions across the state and the concern for the safety of first responders in these dangerously high temperatures.” The ban includes a cease and desist order for all private burning. LDEQ’s actions will expand the reach of the ban.