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## LDEQ Secretary makes second visit to Cottonport Monofill

**BATON ROUGE** – Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto traveled to Avoyelles Parish yesterday to continue to work on-site with the agency’s Tiger Team to craft the remediation of the Cottonport Monofill site, a long-shuttered waste tire processing facility. This is the facility that caught fire on January 19, 2022, the smoke from which necessitated the weeklong evacuation the following day of all 1,500 inmates from the adjacent Raymond Laborde Correctional Center. The Cottonport Monofill facility has been abandoned since 2017.



*LDEQ Secretary Giacometto inspects the waste tires at the Cottonport Monofill facility.*

“Consistent with Governor Landry’s directive,” **Secretary Giacometto said**, “to protect Louisiana’s second-to-none environment, LDEQ is taking the difficult steps necessary to clean up the unmitigated sites that have been left and forgotten by previous administrations. The Cottonport Monofill site – where a mountain of 50,000 to 100,000 used tires have been deserted in an unprocessed state – poses unique challenges. The unprocessed tires are in addition to several other large stockpiles of processed tires, some of which were partially burned in the fire, and which are currently housed in pits. All in all, an estimated 123,000 tons of old tires in various forms must be mitigated. There is also a retention pond on the site to be drained and mitigated. LDEQ has put a talented and resourceful Tiger Team headed by

Oscar Magee in place who will work with the local officials to identify and agree upon the necessary mitigation steps, secure the necessary funding and supervise the Cottonport Monofill clean-up project to its completion.”

The site is located on a 74-acre parcel. The Cottonport Monofill facility was first permitted in 1995 to process, chip and shred waste tires to be used in civil engineering projects, for playground surfaces and as a supplemental fuel source for industrial power cogenerations. On the site also is the monofil, a temporary landfill where the processed materials were to be stored until they could be transported off-site.

The site’s owner and operator was Cottonport Monofill, LLC who obtained a \$4M mortgage on the land and its fixtures. The loan was issued by Union Bank that was later acquired by First Guaranty Bank. Cottonport Monofill, LLC declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2015. The bankruptcy was converted to a Chapter



*LDEQ Secretary Giacometto tours the Cottonport Monofill facility with parish officials.*

7 the next year. In the bankruptcy proceedings First Guaranty Bank, because of the pending liabilities, declined to assume the ownership of the facility. Mr. Lloyd Ward, the principal of Cottonport Monofill, LLC has reportedly since relocated to Tanzania.

“The Cottonport Monofill site has been a longstanding health hazard to the city of Cottonport and Avoyelles Parish community residents, and I am encouraged that the new leadership at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has taken the initiative to get this hazard cleaned up and restore this property for beneficial use by our community,” **Representative Daryl Deshotel said.**

The Cottonport project is just one of a handful of projects that have been identified by Secretary Giacometto as “legacy projects.” Another legacy project, the LAlumina Plant’s “red dust” residue in Ascension Parish has also been assigned by the Secretary a “Tiger Team,” and the cleanup of that facility is beginning. As additional progress is made, more LDEQ “Tiger Team” announcements will be forthcoming.

“We have been worried about this site for several years,” **Avoyelles Parish President Darrell Wiley said,** “and we are thankful for the commitment shown by our state leaders and LDEQ’s new leadership in ridding the Parish of the potential hazards associated with the old Monofill site.”