Bobby Jindal
GOVERNOR

Bruce D. Greenstein
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health

September 26, 2012

Mr. Martin S. Triche
4554 Highway 1
Napoleonville, LA 70390

Dear Mr. Triche,

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health (DHH) is reviewing environmental data collected in the vicinity of Bayou Corne to determine the potential for the general public's exposure to contaminants.

The DHH has received and reviewed the following data related to the Bayou Corne event:

DATE (S) SAMPLED	DESC.	# of SAMPLES/ READINGS	SAMPLED BY	PARAMETERS ANALYZED	DATE(S) REVIEWED BY OPH
09/11/2012	Water from Wells (industrial) 007-95, 007-73,007-98,007-88,007-89, 007-90,007-80,007-87,007-81,007-72	10	LDEQ	Benzene, Toluene, Ethylbenzene, Xylene	09/19/2012
		10		Chloride, Total Dissolved Solids	
		10		Butane, Ethane, Ethene, Propane, Methane*	

*See attachment

There are several types of risk to human health related to the chemicals sampled:

1) Risk of illness (short-term, long term) due to exposure to a chemical at levels that could cause illness
2) Risk of fire/ explosion
3) Risk of injury

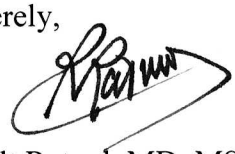
Of the chemicals reviewed, only methane, detected in the industrial water wells, presents a potential health risk (Type 2, risk of fire/explosion) for the time period sampled. DHH is asked

to evaluate human health risk. The focus of DHH's recommendations is on the Type 1 risk of illness (exposure to a chemical with a pathway to the population at doses expected to cause an illness). High levels of methane pose a risk of fire and explosion that are beyond Type 1 risk. DHH does not ignore this type of risk and has the duty to call attention to that type of risk. Of course, for this Type 2 risk, many physical conditions should be considered.

DHH's letter dated September 13, 2012 cautions, "The guidance from the U.S Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining in Technical Measures for the Investigation and Mitigation of Fugitive Methane Hazards in Areas of Coal Mining (Sept 2001), that was provided to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital by the Center for Disease Control/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR), states on page 34 that there is an immediate action level of 28 mg/L (28,000 ug/L). See weblink http://arblast.osmre.gov/downloads/Mine%20Gases%20and%20Dust/FINAL-Methane.pdf. The remedial action called for is located on page 106 of the document. With levels as high as 22,400, 26,600, and 27,700 ug/L it would appear that immediate remediation is warranted." Consistent with this recommendation and based on these industrial well sample reviews, DHH recommends immediate remediation of water wells with high levels of methane. DHH understands that physical conditions may cause environmental regulatory scientists to modify their recommendations according to local circumstances and risk to health.

DHH encourages local residents to heed evacuation orders issued, avoid restricted areas, and discuss any health concerns they may have with their physician. DHH will continue to monitor the situation for possible impacts on public health and review environmental data as it is made available to the agency. If you have any questions, please call me at 504-458-5428.

Sincerely,



Raoult Ratard, MD, MS, MPH, FACPM
State Epidemiologist
LDHH/Office of Public Health

METHANE CONCENTRATIONS FROM INDUSTRIAL WATER WELLS COLLECTED

September 11, 2012

DATE (S) SAMPLED	STATE REGISTRATION #	SAMPLED BY	METHANE CONCENTRATION (ug/L)	DATE(S) REVIEWED BY OPH
09/11/2012	007-89	LDEQ	12,100	09/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-95	LDEQ	21,700	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-73	LDEQ	14,200	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-98	LDEQ	14,100	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-88	LDEQ	15,300	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-90	LDEQ	16,100	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-80	LDEQ	14,000	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-87	LDEQ	18,700	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-81	LDEQ	21,000	9/19/2012
9/11/2012	007-72	LDEQ	12,300	9/19/2012