



UNITED FOR A HEALTHY GULF

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LOUISIANA GETS AN “F” FOR WATER QUALITY PROTECTIONS

Gulf Restoration Network Report Reveals Poor Water Quality Policy Gulf-Wide

NEW ORLEANS- Today the Gulf Restoration Network released its “**Clean Up Your Act!**” report card, which grades Gulf of Mexico states on how they implement the Clean Water Act and protect their state waters and public health. Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas all received disappointing and unsatisfactory grades for their failure to incorporate the Clean Water Act into state policies. The report grades the Gulf States on issues such as establishing water quality standards, policies to prevent Dead Zone-causing pollution, public health protection, and facilitating public participation in the policy-making process

“Louisiana received an ‘F’ because DEQ is failing to take the steps necessary to protect our bayous, lakes and rivers,” stated Matt Rota, Water Resources Program Director for the Gulf Restoration Network. “By following the Clean Water Act, Louisiana can put more protective rules on the books. The Gulf-wide ‘D+’ shows that every Gulf State must do more to prioritize the health of the states’ waters and public welfare, and enact proper laws to ensure these protections.”

The **Clean Up Your Act!** report card clearly establishes that the responsibility of maintaining healthy waters in the Gulf region has been neglected by state governments. In Louisiana that means more coastal pollution, degraded water quality, impaired bayous, lakes and rivers, and estuaries that struggle to survive. Louisiana’s coastal economy and state fisheries directly depend on clean, healthy rivers and estuaries.

Louisiana received an “F,” the worst grade among the Gulf States. Louisiana received this grade because it failed to:

- Enact rules that keep clean waters clean
- Utilize proper standards for disease-causing pathogens

No Gulf state has formally implemented criteria to reduce the nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that cause Dead Zones across the Gulf. Most states fail to use the best water quality tests to protect the public from disease-causing organisms. Public involvement in state-level compliance with the Clean Water Act has been kept at a minimum.

The Report suggests Louisiana can raise its grade by:

- Adopt rules that will ensure that clean waterbodies are kept that way
- At a minimum, follow EPA guidance regarding bacteria standards
- Adopt numeric standards for nitrogen and phosphorus pollution

Currently Louisiana uses the weakest allowable standards to make sure waters are safe for swimming. These weaker standards could be putting human health at risk by not properly indicating if a water body is too polluted. Tracy Kuhns from Louisiana Bayoukeeper notes that “Louisiana should be one of the country’s leading states in terms of water regulations, but instead we are lagging behind with outdated policies. This failure threatens Louisiana’s fisheries based culture and its economic contribution of high quality, wild caught seafood and world class sport fishing.”

The full report can be reviewed on the Gulf Restoration Network’s website, www.healthygulf.org.

The Gulf Restoration Network is a diverse network of individuals and local, regional, and national groups committed to uniting and empowering people to protect and restore the resources of the Gulf region for future generations. Founded in 1994, the GRN has members in each of the five Gulf states.

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