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# Plaquemines Parish coal export terminal project receives Corps of Engineers approval

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A coal export terminal in Plaquemines Parish, criticized by residents about concern over health issues and increased rail traffic, has received a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. *(Andrea Shaw, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)*

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Rejecting a call for a public hearing, the Army Corps of Engineers has approved a permit for a controversial coal export terminal on the west bank of the Mississippi River in **Plaquemines Parish**. The corps, which enforces the Clean Water Act, issued the permit Friday to RAM Terminals LLC.

The project drew criticism from some residents and environment advocates for its effect on health and on a major coastal restoration project. RAM would process 6 million tons of coal annually at its plant on 600 acres near **Myrtle Grove**.

Grace Morris, senior organizer of the Gulf Restoration Network, called the corps' decision "outrageous." The terminal would affect a broad area, with trains carrying uncovered cars of coal through Gretna and Belle Chasse and mounds of coal piled next to the mid-Barataria sediment diversion project, she said.

"By granting this permit, the Army corps is unapologetically choosing to ignore the state's top engineers and thousands of public comments and unanimous resolutions passed by Jefferson Parish, Plaquemines Parish and the cities of Gretna and Westwego," Morris said. "Gulf families want and deserve a full analysis of how the RAM Terminal would impact their quality of life and important coastal restoration projects. The fight for coastal restoration and healthy economic development is the fight for our lives in Louisiana."

Coal trains destined for the RAM Terminal export site at Myrtle Grove would travel through Jefferson Parish.  
Dan Swenson, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

Responding to the concerns of residents, the Gretna and Jefferson councils asked the corps to weigh the effect of the terminal on the Mid-Barataria diversion, which is

designed to build wetlands. The \$250 million project could begin in 2015.

The corps declined. It said it asked for comment after RAM Terminal first applied for a permit in March 2012.

The permit lets RAM Terminals to "clear, grade, excavate and deposit fill." For details on the permit, click

**here.**

RAM Terminal said the plant is needed as the demand for coal increases. The coal would come from producers in the Illinois Basin and western and central Appalachia, and be shipped out to Asia and Europe. The project is expected to employ 150 people upon completion, 300 during construction.

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