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Plaquemines Parish Council postpones vote on coal export terminal's building permit

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The **Plaquemines Parish Council** on Thursday postponed a vote on the building permit for the **controversial RAM Terminals LLC coal export facility** on the west bank of the Mississippi River.

The deferral means the vote will be left to a new council set to take office in January. The building permit is the last approval needed for the controversial terminal to move forward.

But Devin Martin, of the Sierra Club, said after the council meeting that the organization, the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, the Gulf Restoration Network, and several residents still have a pending **state court lawsuit** challenging the state Department of Natural Resources' permit for the project.

Martin said there is no injunction barring the terminal from continuing forward pending the outcome of that suit.

The Parish Council postponed its vote on the building permit until its Jan. 8 meeting in Belle Chasse.

In January, **seven new council members** are set to be inaugurated to the 9-member Parish Council. Martin said it would be interesting to see how the new council approaches the issue.

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

RAM would process 6 million tons of coal annually at its plant on 600 acres near Myrtle Grove, north of Ironton. It would load, unload, mix and store coal on site. Also it

would increase rail traffic, with coal being brought to the facility.

Gretna officials **have called for rerouting such train traffic** following health concerns and residents' fears about a decrease in their property values from uncovered train cars of coal rumbling through the West Bank.

On Tuesday, the Regional Planning Commission of New Orleans **selected HDR Engineering to conduct an**

environmental study on the feasibility of relocating trains from downtown Gretna and Louisiana 23 to Harvey.

RAM Terminal officials have 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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