



# The State of the Movement

**There has never been a better time to work for environmental health and justice in Louisiana and to join the movement to combat climate change. We refuse to let industry destroy our state and our planet. Join us.**

The state of our movement is strong. Despite the money and power amassed by the oil, gas and chemical industry, the tide is turning. Tens of thousands of people across our state are speaking up to oppose dirty projects and to support a transition to renewable energy—an industry that would create good, safe jobs.

Our movement is also urgent. The oil, gas and chemical industry's pollution and pipelines have transformed our very landscape, shredding what was a boot-shaped state into an unraveling sock. Industry is continuing this onslaught, ramming natural gas export terminals into our coast. The gas and petrochemical industry are conspiring with our state government to build or expand 111 more facilities in Louisiana in the next decade.<sup>1</sup>

**In this crisis is an opportunity: a growing movement of people and organizations like the ones listed on the back cover.** We are exposing and challenging industry's corruption. In St. James Parish, emails obtained by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic documented the parish council's secret meetings with a Chinese chemical company called Wanhua.<sup>2</sup> And the Energy Future New Orleans coalition exposed that Entergy not only hired actors to pose as supporters,<sup>3</sup> but also violated the Louisiana Open Meetings Act in its push for a gas-fired power plant in New Orleans East.<sup>4</sup> Five years or even two years ago, this corruption might have gone undetected. But not anymore. Not in our state.



# OUR MOVEMENT IS STRONG

## BY THE NUMBERS

Project	Public Comments in Opposition
<b>Bayou Bridge Pipeline</b>	<b>24,000<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>Formosa Plastics, St. James</b>	<b>15,000<sup>6</sup></b>



Thousands of people opposed the Bayou Bridge Pipeline. Hundreds of people opposed the Louisiana Public Service Commission’s decision to end net metering for rooftop solar.<sup>7</sup> **Though government agencies and elected officials defy public opinion, this moment is an evolution of consciousness in Louisiana.** After generations of abuse, we understand that the oil, gas, and chemical industry has devastated our state. We are taking action when our state and federal government lack the will to do so. The next step is to pressure our government to act on our behalf.

### Six parishes that have sued the oil industry for destruction of the coast:

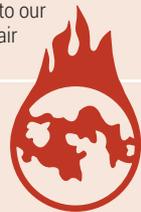
Cameron, Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Vermillion

**5** parishes with Republican leadership **42** lawsuits

**New Orleans Mayor Latoya Cantrell:** “Our way of life is threatened by the damage done to our coastal wetlands...If current trends hold, New Orleans will be a literal coastal city within the next fifty years—with no protective land barriers. Given the challenges we face when it comes to our infrastructure, the additional strain of these damages demands action. Getting our fair share means being made whole by the companies who have harmed us.”<sup>8</sup>

**72%** Percentage of people in Louisiana who believe climate change will affect future generations<sup>9</sup>

**50%** Percentage who believe it is affecting us now<sup>10</sup>



# INDUSTRY'S LAST-DITCH EFFORT

## The jobs and benefits that don't exist

What do you do when the jobs are dwindling, when most have moved to Texas, and the bulk that remain are temporary construction jobs? If you are the oil, gas and chemical industry, you resort to manipulative public relations, questionable economic “studies,” and special favors from legislators.

**Legislation:** The passage of House Bill 727 in the 2018 legislative session made pipeline protests a felony—a clear sign that industry is afraid of us. Written by the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, this legislative overreach exposes the industry's weakness. It has lost the battle of public opinion and thus threatens jail time to those who disagree.

**Public relations:** Chevron's TV commercials feature smiling young people replanting grasses along the coast that the oil industry destroyed. But young people are not fooled, as the growing Sunrise Movement has shown.

## Imitating our movement

The industry has created three groups: Grow Louisiana, Consumer Energy Alliance, and Louisianans for Energy. These are fake grassroots groups—only commercials and web sites—that create a veneer of public support. In reality, these are industry front groups that protect corporations from Texas, Delaware, China, Taiwan— everywhere but Louisiana. Despite plenty of money, these groups cannot muster public support. At hearing after hearing on proposed new industry in Louisiana, the only people in support of projects are those paid by industry.

## One-sided economics

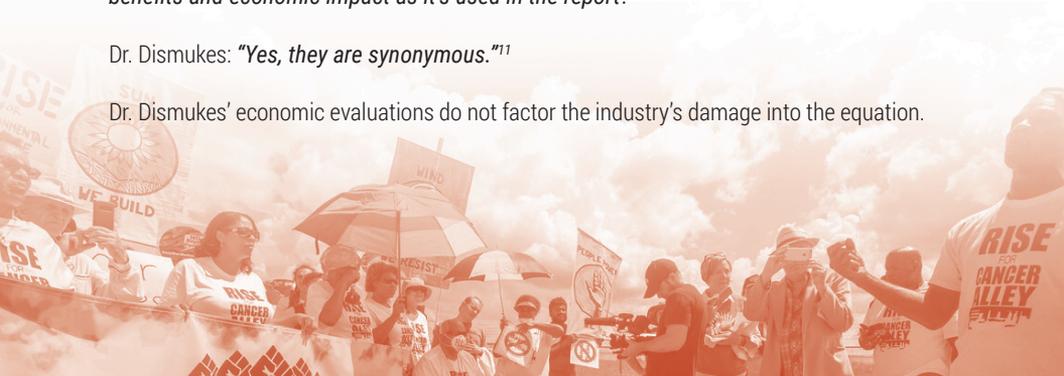
One of the industry's oft-cited boosters is David Dismukes, Director of Louisiana State University's Energy Center. He acknowledged under oath that his economic “study”—a 26 slide Power Point presentation—of the Bayou Bridge Pipeline assessed only the economic benefits of the project and not the cost.

Misha Mitchell, a staff attorney with Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, conducted the deposition.

Ms. Mitchell: *“And then can you explain to me the difference in use between economic benefits and economic impact as it's used in the report?”*

Dr. Dismukes: *“Yes, they are synonymous.”<sup>11</sup>*

Dr. Dismukes' economic evaluations do not factor the industry's damage into the equation.



# The strength of our movement is our young people.



**Ida Schenk gave this speech at the Climate Strike in New Orleans. Her first participation in the movement was the December 2016 takeover of the oil and gas lease auction at the New Orleans Superdome.**

"My name is Ida Schenk, and I am 12 years old, in seventh grade at the Waldorf School of New Orleans where I started an environmental club called the Green Taggers.

I was born in Louisiana and have lived here my whole life, and I have seen how much the oil companies have taken from the people here: our health, our land, and our future. I cannot understand how knowing this anyone could go on with life as usual or turn a blind eye. The fossil fuel industry has taken more than that, though. They have taken our integrity; so many people who know that fossil fuels are bad have had to turn to them for work, compromising what they know is wrong.

My generation is constantly told to dream big, but how can we when our collective future is so small? My biggest dream right now is not for what's to come in the future, it's to have a future. Instead of having hope, I think that we need to hold the oil companies accountable for our losses, and use our anger and fear as a weapon to demand a future from those who would trade it for mere profit."

*New Orleans, 2019 Global Youth Climate Strike*



**Maxwell Brown is in the 5th grade. He has a vision for transforming the oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.**

"I was standing on a beach and saw an oil rig. The drilling right now is really stupid—I hate it. They're ruining the earth by drilling and oil spilling.

My vision for the oil rigs on the coast is that someone turns them into a hotel on the water. You can take boat cruises, jet skis, and just live out there for a couple of weeks. You could go fishing, dining, and stay in a bunch of hotel rooms. Getting to the rig would be a luxury boat ride with a bunch of jazz playing on it while you were eating po'boys on a ferry."



## The Win Column

**Thanks to the dedication and determination of many of us here in Louisiana, we have an ever-growing list of victories. This list represents some of our recent wins.**

**2019: Victory Against Wanhua**

St. James residents, led by RISE St. James, consistently spoke out against the \$1.5 billion dollar Wanhua chemical plant at public hearings, parish council meetings and in the media. The Tulane Environmental Law Clinic represented RISE and the Louisiana Bucket Brigade in an appeal of the planning commission approval, giving time for increased scrutiny of the project. Wanhua abandoned its plan under withering public pressure and economic uncertainties.<sup>12</sup>

**2019: Cyanide plant out of Jefferson**

In a matter of four months, hundreds of Jefferson Parish residents organized to stop Cornerstone Chemical's cyanide plant from expanding. The Jefferson Parish Council originally approved the \$100 million project, but after continuous public pressure, they rescinded the permit in April of 2019.<sup>13</sup>

**2019: Global Youth Climate Strike**

Along with 4 million activists worldwide, New Orleans youth and supporters organized three climate strikes in New Orleans, drawing hundreds of people to strike for immediate climate action. This was the largest youth-led climate strike New Orleans has ever seen.

**2019: March along Cancer Alley**

For five days, Cancer Alley residents and environmental justice allies marched from Reserve, LA to Baton Rouge, demanding an end to the poisoning of communities in Cancer Alley. After the march, elected officials finally began to acknowledge the crisis, and many partnerships were formed with the commitment to bring justice to Cancer Alley.

### **2016 – 2019: Plummeting oil prices**

Ongoing auctions of drilling leases in the Gulf of Mexico consistently garner few bids, a clear demonstration of the weakening economic rationale for offshore drilling. Louisiana residents' takeover of the auction in the spring of 2016 remains a high point in the region's resistance to the oil, gas and chemical industry.<sup>14</sup>

*General Honoré's GreenARMY in Saint Rose*



### **2017: Rammed out of Plaquemines Parish**

The west bank of the Mississippi River was the proposed site of a RAM coal terminal that would have processed six million tons of coal every year. After initially issuing the permit, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) paused the project thanks to ongoing organizing and a successful legal challenge brought by local residents, Healthy Gulf, the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, and Waltzer, Wiygul & Garside, LLC.

### **2015: Victory in North Louisiana**

Thousands of concerned citizens in northwest Louisiana forced the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to stop a proposed open burn of 15 million pounds of hazardous waste explosives, reversing a legal agreement for an emergency superfund cleanup that had been signed by EPA, the Department of Defense, and the state of Louisiana. After the victory, North Louisiana joined with other communities around the country to form the CeaseFire Campaign, which pressured Congress to fund a National Academy of Sciences' study of open burning alternatives.

***The State of the Movement is strong. When we join together, we are unstoppable.***

*Now is the time to get more involved and engage with one of these organizations.*

RISE St. James  
Concerned Citizens of St. John  
350 New Orleans  
Alliance for Affordable Energy  
Antenna Gallery  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Citizens' Climate Lobby (NOLA, Lafayette)  
Coalition Against Death Alley  
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice  
EarthJustice  
Earthworks  
Extinction Rebellion NOLA  
Fossil Free Fest  
Fossil Free Tulane  
Green Taggers

GreenARMY  
Grow Dat Youth Farm  
Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy  
Healthy Gulf  
Justice and Beyond  
L'eau Est La Vie Camp  
Louisiana Bucket Brigade  
Louisiana Environmental Action Network  
New Orleans Peoples' Assembly  
No Waste NOLA  
North Louisiana for Earth and Water Justice  
People's Assembly  
Sierra Club  
Sunrise Movement  
Tulane Environmental Law Clinic

## ENDNOTES

- 1 "Tracking Oil and Gas Infrastructure Emissions." Environmental Integrity Project, August 21, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.environmentalintegrity.org/oil-gas-infrastructure-emissions/>.
- 2 Genevieve Butler, Pastor Harry Joseph, Sr., RISE St. James, and the Louisiana Bucket Brigade vs. St. James Parish, the St. James Parish Council, and the St. James Parish Planning Commission, 2rd Judicial District Court. July 15, 2019.
- 3 Stein, Michael Isaac. "Actors Were Paid to Support Entergy's Power Plant at New Orleans City Council Meetings." The Lens, May 4, 2018.
- 4 "Judge Rules City Council Violated Open Meetings Law in Entergy Paid Actor Suits." WDSU 6, June 14, 2019.
- 5 Public Records Request Regarding Bayou Bridge Pipeline, pg.3. LDEQ, December 16, 2017. Retrieved from <http://labucketbrigade.org/sites/default/files/Compiled%20LDEQ%20Public%20Records%20Analysis%2C%20Chart%20and%20E%20mails.pdf>
- 6 "State Receives Over 15,000 Comments Opposing Permits for the Construction of Formosa's Planned Petrochemical Complex in St. James Parish." EarthJustice, August 22, 2019.
- 7 Hammer, David. "Solar Net-Metering Benefits Slashed by La. Public Service Commission." 4WWL, September 11, 2019.
- 8 "Mayor Latoya Cantrell Announces City of New Orleans Lawsuit Against Oil & Gas Companies over Coastal Erosion." City of New Orleans, March 29, 2019.
- 9 BDPC, LLC, Coastal Survey - Topline Report 2019 (2019). Retrieved from <http://mississippiriverdelta.org/new-poll-shows-vast-majority-of-louisiana-voters-concerned-about-coastal-land-loss-climate-change/>.
- 10 "Statewide Louisiana Coastal Issues Survey." BDPC, LLC, July, 2019. Retrieved from <http://mississippiriverdelta.org/files/2019/08/2019-Coastal-Survey-Topline-Deck.pdf>.
- 11 Bayou Bridge Pipeline, LLC v. 38.00 Acres, More Or Less, Located In St. Martin Parish; Barry Scott Carline et al. (2018). (transcript of the deposition of David Dismukes).
- 12 "Wanhua Chemical Pulls Application for \$1.2B St. James Plant." New Orleans City Business, September 6, 2019.
- 13 Broach, Drew. "Cyanide Plant Permit Revoked by Jefferson Parish Council in Extraordinary about-Face." Nola.com, April 5, 2019.
- 14 Smith, Matt. "Protesters Take Over Federal Auction of Oil and Gas Leases in the Gulf of Mexico." Vice, March 23, 2016.

"Victory is Mine" has become the anthem of the movement along Cancer Alley, where residents seek a moratorium on industry.

Victory is mine,  
Victory is mine,  
Victory today is mine.  
I told Satan: get thee behind,  
Victory today is mine.

Joy is mine,  
Joy is mine,  
Joy today is mine  
I told Satan: get thee behind,  
I know that joy is mine.

Happiness is mine,  
Happiness is mine,  
Happiness today is mine.  
I told Satan: get thee behind,  
Happiness today is mine.



*CREDITS: Written and produced by the Louisiana Bucket Brigade. We give thanks and honor to all of the people and organizations that make our movement strong. Please email us at [info@labucketbrigade.org](mailto:info@labucketbrigade.org) to alert us of groups we may have left off the list.*

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Julie Dermansky photo on pg. 1*