

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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HEADLINE: Environmentalists ask federal revocation of DEQ permitting, regulation authority

DATELINE: BATON ROUGE, La.

BODY:

The federal government should revoke the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's authority to issue permits and regulate **air** quality because the agency is incapable of protecting residents and the environment, environmental groups said.

Some of the groups making the request already have asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to take away the state's power to regulate water pollution. An air pollution petition was filed on behalf of Concerned Citizens of New Sarpy, the Louisiana **Bucket Brigade**, the Refinery Reform Project of the Texas Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Coalition and the Louisiana Environmental Action Network.

DEQ spokesman Jim Friloux said the agency believes it is more than capable of regulating air pollution. He said he had not seen the petition and couldn't comment.

The groups cited a recent report by the state legislative auditor that questioned whether DEQ is protecting human health and the environment.

DEQ Secretary Dale Givens said his agency is working to improve some of the issues raised by the audit. He also said many of the problems stem from a lack of stable funding for DEQ.

EPA officials have said they will consider the petition to take away the state's water policing authority after all ongoing audits and reviews are completed. The petition filed over air pollution recounts the findings of the legislative auditor.

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