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VIA Email: Kristin.Palmer@nola.gov

CM Kristin Palmer & the New Orleans City Council
City Hall, Room 2W40
1300 Perdido Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear City Council Members:

We have learned that the delicate nature of our seafood products can be decimated by seemingly unrelated acts. The devastating impact of the April 2010 BP oil spill, dozens of miles off the coast of Louisiana, can still be felt a decade later. We are reminded of the damage to the seafood industry caused by freshwater diversions every time we are forced to open spillways and other structures.

More recently, following the Bianca Spill of nearly a billion plastic pellets into our Mississippi River, it is clear that neither industry nor federal or state agencies will take responsibility to prevent pellet spills. This plastic will exist in our waterways for thousands of years, obstructing the bellies of birds and fish. The petrochemical industry is a threat to our wildlife, our communities, our seafood industry, and our economy in Louisiana.

St. James and Orleans Parish share the Mississippi River as a drinking water source. In the 1990s, the EPA changed the way that industrial plants discharged phosphogypsum waste into the river to protect New Orleans' drinking water. Now, New Orleans faces a new threat from the St. James area, in the form of Formosa Plastics.

Formosa Plastics is proposing to build one of the largest plastic plants in the world just upriver from New Orleans in St. James Parish. The massive complex would discharge chemical and plastic pollution into the Mississippi River and Lac Des Allemands, proclaimed the "Catfish Capital of the Universe" by our state legislation.

This would mean more plastic spills, on the order of the Bianca Spill, at a regular clip, and irreparable damage to commercial, recreational and sport fishing, along with seafood suppliers and restaurants.

But Formosa Plastics is not a done deal. Its permits are on hold, pending more environmental impact analysis, and it has not received storm or wastewater permits. We are asking the Council to protect our state's seafood industry for the following reasons:

1. Formosa Plastics will dump storm runoff and plastic pellets into the Mississippi River, into St. James waterways leading into Lac Des Allemands, and into the Gulf of Mexico.
2. Formosa Plastics has destroyed fisheries in Texas and Vietnam. In Vietnam, a Formosa steel plant spill killed over 100 tons of fish, devastating the economies of four coastal provinces reliant on the seafood industry.

In Texas, billions of plastic pellets have been and continue to be found across wetlands near Formosa's Point Comfort facility. The company

3. There is no federal or state agency that take responsibility for preventing plastic spills. These pellets are not technically considered hazardous waste, which would make them subject to federal or state regulations. Exasperated by the lack of action, over 40 New Orleans residents have worked over 400 hours assessing and cleaning up the Bianca Spill, from August 2020 to November 2020.
4. Plastic pellets absorb surrounding environmental toxins and are consumed by marine life, passing along the food chain until these toxins ultimately land on our dinner plates in homes and restaurants across the city, state, and country.

None of us would argue the benefit the Formosa Plastics plant would have on our workforce. However, we should recognize the negative impact this would have on our seafood industry and the scores of jobs dependent on that sector of the economy. We are asking you, the New Orleans City Council, to protect our state's seafood industry and pass Resolution NO. R-21-92 opposing the proposed Formosa Plastics plant in St. James Parish. We appreciate your consideration.

Best regards,



Steven L. Pettus
Managing Partner/COO

Cc: Kate McIntosh