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Geismar

Mitsubishi Geismar Site: Fact Sheet

Overview

Mitsubishi Chemical Company is trying to build a \$1 billion petrochemical facility that would produce methyl methacrylate (MMA) on a 77-acre site in Geismar, LA, making it the largest plastics facility of its kind in the world. Mitsubishi plans to eventually expand the site to include a carbon monoxide plant, a formalin plant, and a methanol plant.

State officials lured Mitsubishi to this location by offering a \$4 million grant through the Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP) and Quality Jobs tax credit program.

Mitsubishi is in the process of obtaining permits from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) that would enable the facility to emit roughly 781,000 tons of greenhouse gases and hundreds of other toxic gases each year, making this site among the 50 highest polluters in Louisiana. If LDEQ grants the air permit in 2024, Mitsubishi could start construction of the plant as early as 2025.

Mitsubishi's proposed permit does not include fenceline monitoring, methods to ensure compliance with emission limits, and strict control equipment and technologies – all demonstrating the lack of systems in place to address and detect leaks, flares, and dangerous emissions that would impact and endanger surrounding residents.

> POLLUTION FROM THIS PROJECT

- This facility is another example of the attempt to centralize global plastics production in Louisiana. Like Formosa Plastics, if Mitsubishi is built, it would be the largest plastics plant of its kind in the world.
- The proposed location is within 3 miles of ~10,000 Geismar residents who are already surrounded by petrochemical facilities.
- The area's lifetime cancer risk is 1 in 6,400 - significantly higher than what the EPA deems "unacceptable."

About Geismar, Louisiana

Located along the Mississippi River in Ascension Parish, Geismar is within the "Cancer Alley" region between New Orleans and Baton Rouge that has among the worst air quality and highest cancer rates in the country.

It is an area at high risk for flooding due to location situated in wetlands. That risk is predicted to worsen over time due to climate change. Recently, the number of petrochemical plants in Ascension Parish has rapidly increased as nine plants are proposed or under construction.

Geismar community members within a 3-mile radius of the proposed site are:

- In the 99th percentile nationally and 99th percentile statewide for toxic releases to the air
- In the 94th percentile nationally and 98th percentile statewide for air toxics cancer risk
- In the 90th percentile nationally and 93rd percentile statewide for wastewater discharge

Additionally, the lifetime cancer risk for the area is already 1 in 6,400 which is significantly larger than the 1 in 10,000 benchmark that the EPA deems “unacceptable risk.”

Health and Environmental Risks of the Site

The proposed plant is projected to emit extreme levels of air pollutants. Five of the pollutants that the Mitsubishi site plans to emit are above the “significant emission rate” outlined by law.

These air pollutants pose a serious threat to community members’ health:

- **Particulate matter exposure** is associated with higher risks of asthma attacks, heart attacks, stroke, developmental and lung issues in children, cardiovascular disease, infant mortality, low birth rate, and more. Long-term exposure is associated with neurological effects and cancer.
- **Nitrogen oxides** can worsen or lead to various respiratory diseases which pose an elevated risk for children, the elderly, and groups with higher rates of asthma affliction such as Native Americans and African Americans.

- When **volatile organic compounds** and **nitrogen oxides** react, they form harmful air pollutants that increase community members’ risks of lung infection, difficulty breathing, and diseases like asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema.

If built, Mitsubishi’s Geismar site would release toxic air pollutants such as formaldehyde (a carcinogen), ammonia (projected to emit 21.56 tons of ammonia annually), and methanol (projected to emit 12.76 tons of it annually).

Ascension Parish was previously designated an “ozone nonattainment area” (an area with dangerous pollution levels exceeding air quality standards) by the EPA and is currently in “maintenance status” (long term efforts to reduce ozone pollution), which indicates that, for the sake of good air quality and public health, no additional facilities should be built in the parish.

> WAYS TO HELP

Mitsubishi’s proposed plant is just that, proposed. We can protect our homes and stop this plant the same way we stopped Formosa Plastics in St. James: by getting organized, showing up, and demanding a better, cleaner and healthier future.

If you want to help protect the Geismar community and stop Mitsubishi’s petrochemical plant, email info@labucketbrigade.org with the subject line “Protect Ascension.” Learn more about the groups taking on this project at RuralRootsLouisiana.org and LaBucketBrigade.org.