



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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**For Immediate Release:**  
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### **Judge sentences St. Landry Parish man to jail for environmental crimes**

**BATON ROUGE** – Today, the Honorable Judge Thomas F. Fuselier of the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Ville Platte sentenced Joseph L. Jones, 57, of St. Landry Parish, to 36 months imprisonment, a fine of \$80,000 and five years of supervised probation after his release from jail stemming from his conviction on multiple violations of the Louisiana Water Control Law. Plaisance Development Corporation was sentenced to a \$150,000 fine and 5 years of supervised probation. As a result, Jones cannot be associated with wastewater treatment operations in his employment ever again.

In September, an Evangeline Parish jury convicted Jones on 15 of 15 felony counts along with his company, Plaisance Development Corporation on 15 of 15 felony counts for knowing violations of the Louisiana Water Control Law. Jones is the president and chairman of the board of Plaisance Development Corporation, a sewage treatment company responsible for operating and maintaining six sewage treatment facilities servicing residential subdivisions throughout Evangeline Parish.

In February 2010, Jones was arrested by Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality investigators and charged with knowing violations of PDC's Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits by not taking water samples or submitting water discharge monitoring results, causing or allowing unpermitted water discharges and failing to provide proper operation and maintenance for the six facilities.

The prosecution team consisted of Trent Brignac, 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court District Attorney and Assistant District Attorney Tim Fontenot. DEQ's Criminal Counsel Mike Daniels was the lead prosecutor.

“It is DEQ's ongoing mission to aggressively prosecute any sewage treatment facility owner or operator who knowingly skirts the regulations stated in their discharge permit,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “Permit violations come with severe consequences, and unfortunately the citizens who utilize those facilities' services are the ones who suffer the most. DEQ will continue to work with its local, state and federal partners in order to ensure that such matters are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

“Blatant disregard for the health and safety of the citizens of Louisiana through gross pollution of our waterways cannot be tolerated,” said District Attorney Trent Brignac. “Hopefully, the guilty verdicts will send the message that violations of the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System are taken seriously and will be prosecuted.”

Jones was allowed to remain free on bond pending his appeal. Jones and Plaisance Development Corporation face similar charges for sewage treatment facilities in St. Landry Parish. Trial in St. Landry Parish is set for December 2011.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact DEQ at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.