



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



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Environmental News

DEQ RECEIVES DENIAL FOR RFG WAIVER

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality was notified today that the Environmental Protection Agency denied the state's request for a waiver on the use of reformulated gasoline. The gas, which may cost up to 15 cents more per gallon than regular gas, must be in use by June 23, according to EPA.

"I'm disappointed, but this is not unexpected," said DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. "We don't think the citizens in the five-parish Baton Rouge area should be forced to use, and pay for, this gasoline that will have minimal, if any, benefit."

Reformulated gasoline, also known as RFG, has an oxygenate added to make it burn cleaner. The most common oxygenate additives are ethanol, methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) or ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE).

The use of reformulated gasoline is a mandate from the EPA. The federal Clean Air Act states that Ascension, Iberville, Livingston, East Baton Rouge and West Baton Rouge must use the gas because it failed to meet the EPA deadline of Nov. 15, 1999, to reach attainment for ground-level ozone and was listed as "severe." Other areas such as St. Louis, Chicago and Connecticut are currently using the gas.

"Compared to other areas that are using RFG now, our air quality is much better," McDaniel said. "The EPA's new, more stringent eight-hour ozone standard showed the five-parish area as marginal. In the past 25 years, Louisiana has gone from 20 parishes that were in nonattainment to the five-parish area. The community, industry and environmental groups have all worked for better air quality and there have been positive results. RFG will not help the area reach attainment."

McDaniel said that, despite the current setback, DEQ would continue to pursue alternatives to the implementation of RFG.