



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ steps up crackdown on illegal dumping with sting in New Orleans**

BATON ROUGE – As part of its statewide crackdown on illegal dumping, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality worked with local and state agencies to patrol a notorious illegal dump area in eastern New Orleans.

The week-long operation began on March 19 with DEQ surveillance staff flying over the area known as the Almonaster-Gentilly corridor. With the New Orleans Police Department and DEQ supplying personnel on the ground, the two agencies worked together to nab two trash haulers for illegally dumping waste at unpermitted sites and to seize their vehicles.

DEQ brought in staff from across the state and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 6 supplied staff from its Dallas office to conduct a property-to-property search on a large portion of the area on Thursday and Friday. With the Louisiana National Guard also patrolling, DEQ was able to pinpoint areas that are illegally taking waste and take samples to see if there was contamination in the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also participated in an effort to locate wetlands violations.

DEQ inspected 49 sites in the first two days of the crackdown. The department documented areas of concern that involved solid waste, hazardous waste, water quality and asbestos issues. Those who violate environmental regulations face fines and others will face possible criminal action.

Working with New Orleans officials, DEQ has information on area property owners – information that was previously unattainable. Ultimately, the property owners are responsible for cleaning up any illegal waste on their property.

“There is no other illegal dumping site like this in the state,” said DEQ Assistant Secretary Harold Leggett. “It will take a concerted effort from local law enforcement and state government to curtail the high volume of illegal dumping that is taking place along the Almonaster/Gentilly corridor. I think we made great strides last week. Along with assistance from the city, the National Guard and EPA, we need to let those who are thinking about illegal dumping know that there will be consequences.”

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