



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ to distribute questionnaires as part of the Mercury Risk Reduction Plan

BATON ROUGE – Beginning this month, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality will distribute questionnaires to approximately 180 natural gas pipeline owners and operators across the state as part of the Mercury Risk Reduction Plan.

In 2007, DEQ implemented the Mercury Risk Reduction Plan in order to engage industry, regulatory agencies, groups and individuals in reducing the use, release and exposure of mercury within the state. As part of that plan, DEQ has implemented a voluntary survey by which representatives from the oil and gas industry can take a proactive approach to identify, monitor and clean up potential mercury release locations.

“This questionnaire is our first shot at asking the industry as a whole to provide us help in locating potential sites where elemental mercury may be impacting the environment. It is our best chance at addressing the most easily removed sources of mercury affecting our watersheds and wildlife,” said Bill Schramm, DEQ Geologist III.

The questionnaire seeks information on how a pipeline owner/operator may inventory their mercury manometer locations and how ownership of these properties has been transferred through the years. Manometers are measurement devices containing mercury used to record natural gas production across the state. With 20,000-30,000 potential manometer locations in Louisiana, DEQ has been successful in working with several companies over the past 20 years in order to identify and assess approximately 5,000 manometer locations. Volunteers are asked to complete and return their questionnaires within 30 days, or make arrangements with DEQ if further time is needed.

Information gathered from the questionnaires will be compiled into a database which will enable DEQ to monitor and track areas in the state that may contain mercury readings that are above regulatory limits. Upon identification of mercury manometer locations, DEQ will assist site owners/operators in their assessment and clean up efforts through oversight and field testing programs

This effort is an outcome of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Partnership for Environmental Priorities (NPEP), a partnership which focuses on the reduction of potentially hazardous chemicals from products and processes across the United States. Under NPEP, DEQ has partnered with the U.S. EPA, industry, and others in order to reduce the use of toxic chemicals, such as mercury and lead, in the environment. “The USEPA has been very supportive of the DEQ Mercury Reduction Program by providing substantial funding and resources to help discover and reduce the mercury burden released to Louisiana’s environment,” said Schramm.

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