



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ launches new statewide effort on air quality

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality launched a new statewide effort to combat ozone and improve air quality. A statewide Ozone Steering Committee will be a key factor in an air quality education and awareness campaign.

The steering committee will include state and local government, environmental groups, industry, non-profits, trade and community groups. This committee will encourage communities to start their own clean-air coalitions, promote early-action measures to mitigate the impact of the new standard and work with the Congress on Clean Air Act reforms.

Air quality in Louisiana has continued to improve, but on March 12, the Environmental Protection Agency lowered the standard for ozone from 80 parts per billion to 75 parts per billion. The lower standard could put much of the state out of attainment for ozone. Before the change, the state's only nonattainment area was the five-parish Baton Rouge area.

"This committee is the beginning of a grass roots effort to provide information to local and business communities, statewide," said Louis Buatt, DEQ Assistant Secretary. "Information that lets people know what the stakes are and what impacts the new standard will have on communities is vital in early planning. There are positive steps and voluntary measures that can be taken to lessen the impacts, and the committee will offer support for the communities so they can take them."

For more information on air quality and the new standard, visit the DEQ website at www.deq.louisiana.gov.