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LDEQ and partner agencies launch seafood sampling to assess potential impacts of Smitty's Supply fire

BATON ROUGE, LA. — The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) — in coordination with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) — will begin sampling seafood from the Tangipahoa River and Lake Pontchartrain near the river's mouth to evaluate potential contamination following the fire at Smitty's Supply in Roseland and subsequent runoff.

The coordinated sampling initiative began Sept. 18 and will focus on seafood — collected using standard LDWF methods (nets, traps, electrofishing, etc.) — relevant to local consumption. To ensure accurate results and provide comparison, control samples of the same species will also be collected from Bayou Lacombe, an unaffected system. Accredited laboratories, including Eurofins Laboratory, will analyze the samples for heavy metals and petroleum-related hydrocarbons, and the results will be used by LDH and partner agencies to assess any potential public health risks and determine if seafood consumption advisories are warranted.

“This cooperative effort exemplifies our strong commitment to both environmental protection and public health following the incident at Smitty's Supply,” **LDEQ Secretary Courtney J. Burdette said.** “By working side-by-side with our federal and state partners to perform this vital work, we are ensuring that the people of Louisiana receive transparent, science-based information about the safety of our waterways and seafood.”

The sampling will be conducted in multiple rounds to evaluate potential bioaccumulation of contaminants over time. Samples will be tested for heavy metals (such as arsenic, chromium, lead, and barium) and petroleum-related hydrocarbons, including total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Testing will follow EPA-approved or equivalent validated methods, and results will undergo rigorous quality assurance reviews. Interim updates will be shared after each sampling round, and a final report will be published once results establish clear trends.

“Responding quickly and comprehensively to environmental incidents is what our teams are trained to do,” **LDEQ Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Compliance Jerry Lang said.** “This effort is the result of long days and nights of coordination and fieldwork, and I'm proud of the continued dedication of our staff and partners to protect Louisiana's communities and natural resources.”

The first round of seafood sampling began on Thursday, Sept. 18, with results expected to be finalized in approximately two weeks. The second round will follow in 60 days, with additional rounds to be added if required to confirm bioaccumulation trends. Final conclusions will guide any recommendations on seafood safety from the affected areas.

LDEQ is in consultation with EPA on the sampling as part of the ongoing material recovery efforts from the Tangipahoa River. The engaged agencies will continue to work together to ensure that sampling, analysis, and reporting meet the highest technical standards. All results will be shared with the public as they become available.

For more information on Smitty's response efforts, please visit: <https://smittys-plant-fire-epa.hub.arcgis.com/>

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About the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

LDEQ is dedicated to serving the people of Louisiana by providing comprehensive environmental protection to promote and protect health, safety and welfare.
