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**EPA Approves State of Louisiana’s Plan to Meet Sulfur Dioxide Standards in St. Bernard Parish**

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**DALLAS** – (May 22, 2019) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently approved the state of Louisiana’s plan for meeting federal Clean Air Act standards for sulfur dioxide (SO2) in St. Bernard Parish. EPA regulates SO2 under the Clean Air Act’s National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

“Reducing sulfur dioxide emissions is important for public health, especially for children and other vulnerable groups,” **said Acting Regional Administrator David W. Gray.** “With this plan to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions, the state of Louisiana demonstrates its commitment to clean air and the health and safety of the St. Bernard Parish community.”

“This is recognition of lots of hard work by LDEQ personnel with input from our air quality partners, both environmental groups and industry, that has brought almost all of Louisiana into attainment for all of EPA’s criteria air pollutants,” **said LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown.** “We are confident our plan will bring St. Bernard Parish into attainment for SO2, which is the last piece of the attainment puzzle in Louisiana.”

EPA designated St. Bernard Parish as nonattainment for the 2010 1-hour SO2 standard in 2013 based on data from air monitors in the parish. In late 2017, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) submitted its plan for the parish to attain the standard to EPA. LDEQ submitted several supplemental revisions to their plan, including revisions to an administrative order on consent (AOC) for the Rain CII Carbon facility in St. Bernard Parish. Revisions to the AOC included new emissions limits and operating parameters for the facility and updated air dispersion modeling to demonstrate attainment of the standard.

EPA proposed to approve the revisions to the state’s clean-air plan on February 8, 2019. Today’s action serves as EPA’s final approval for the state’s plan for attaining the 2010 NAAQS for SO2 in St. Bernard Parish.

**Background:**

EPA’s NAAQS for SO2 are designed to protect against exposure to the entire group of sulfur oxides. The largest sources of SO2 emissions are from fossil fuel combustion at power plants and other industrial facilities. Short-term exposures to SO2 can harm the human respiratory system and make breathing difficult. People with asthma, particularly children, are sensitive to these effects of SO2. SO2 and other sulfur oxides can react with other compounds in the atmosphere to form fine particles that reduce visibility (haze) in parts of the United States, including many of our treasured national parks and wilderness areas.

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