

Dear Editor,

Please let me respond to Mike McDaniel's December 7 letter charging "intellectual dishonesty" and "outrageous allegations" in my comments addressing Louisiana's new State Implementation Plan (SIP).

That plan contains the following information which was the basis for my letter.

- 1) The plan concludes that pollution blowing in from Houston is a source of the Baton Rouge ozone nonattainment problem.
- 2) The plan requires no reductions in chemical plant emissions of hydrocarbon chemicals, also referred to as volatile organic compounds (VOC's). It was found that no reductions were necessary despite the fact that local industries emit 40 million pounds of VOC's into the air annually, with 30 million pounds being toxic air pollutants. VOC's are the source of any ozone problem and combine with sunlight and nitrogen oxides on hot days to form ozone.
- 3) Biogenic emissions are the primary source of VOC's in the plans required computer model. Biogenic emissions come from natural sources with almost all of these biogenic emissions attributed to trees.

Two of the three computer simulations included in the plan set biogenic emissions at 81.7% of the total VOC's emitted in the five Parish ozone nonattainment area. The SIP goes on to state, "There was a several fold increase in the biogenics inventory for the Baton Rouge modeling domain between the previous SIP and this one." This means that biogenic emissions, or emissions from trees, are now set two to three times higher than they were in the computer modeling included in the last SIP, which was approved by the EPA in July of 1999. Dramatically increasing biogenic emissions serves to mask or drown out the impact of industrial emissions in the computer simulations, making it appear that industrial VOC emissions don't contribute to the ozone problem.

We contend that the new plan overstates emissions from trees and understates the contribution of industrial emissions to our pollution problems.

So, DEQ's new plan finds that computer simulated tree emissions are up and are a problem, computer simulated industrial emissions are not a problem but Houston emissions are a problem. Don't blame us if we find humor in this scenario and talk about good trees gone bad. But the humor stops there because there's nothing funny about the serious problems resulting from the bad air quality that negatively effects our health, our quality of life and our economy.

Sincerely,  
Marylee Orr  
Executive Director  
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