

SENATOR'S NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: SEN. MORRELL
PHONE: 504.284.4794

SEN. MORRELL SETS SPECIAL SENATE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HEARING FOR SEPTEMBER 7TH IN SLIDELL

COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS CIVIL PENALTIES TO BE LEVIED ON BOGALUSA PAPER MILL

The Senate Environmental Quality Committee, chaired by District 3 State Senator Jean-Paul "JP" Morrell (D-New Orleans), will hold a special hearing in Slidell to discuss the progress of the clean-up of the recent fish kill in the Pearl River and the civil penalties to be assessed on the Temple Inland Bogalusa Paper Mill. The special meeting is set for Wednesday, September 7th beginning at 6:30 PM at the Northshore Harbor Center, 100 Harbor Center Blvd.

The Department of Environmental Quality has determined that the Temple Inland-Bogalusa Paper Mill is liable for the fish kill in the Pearl River because the company released excess levels of a chemical by-product and failed to immediately report the incident. Representatives from the paper mill will be in attendance to testify and answer questions pertaining to their involvement and the committee will discuss the levying of civil penalties against the company.

The committee will also discuss the concerns about the number of dead crabs being pulled out of lakes connected to the Pearl River and results from numerous tests conducted on sediments and crabs. Sen. Morrell said that while it is too early to determine whether the paper mill chemical release is the direct cause, the possibility must be examined.

"The residents of our coastline are still recovering from hurricanes and a major oil spill," said Sen. Morrell. "It is imperative that we hold those responsible accountable for their actions. Our citizens deserve our undivided attention on this issue."

In addition to hearing testimony from representatives of the paper mill, the committee will also hear from officials representing St. Tammany, Washington and St. Bernard Parishes, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Health and Hospitals - Office of Public Health, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Sen. Morrell encourages all interested citizens and elected officials in St. Bernard Parish to attend, especially those who have a stake in the crabbing industry.

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