

Community Speaks Out Against Potential West Bank Grain Elevator

Residents, Environmental Groups Voice Concern on Air Quality, Explosion Risk, Harm to Environment



April 2, 2021 (Wallace, LA)---Respiratory irritants, foul smells, and explosion risks are just some of the harmful effects compelling residents and other concerned parties to send approximately 300 letters opposing Greenfield Grain's attempt to locate a grain elevator to the West Bank of St. John the Baptist Parish. The writing campaign was sparked by Greenfield Louisiana's application for a permit from the Army Corp of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Quality. Letters were sent as part of the department's requirement to participate in the public

comment period. Despite the massive footprint of the project, which includes 36 silos and the removal of approximately 1.3 million cubic yards of soil, political leaders have made no efforts to collect community feedback despite knowing of the project as early as last year.

Jo Banner, the Executive Director of the non-profit organization The Descendants Project, first learned about Greenfield Louisiana's application for a permit through an organization outside of the parish. "We were sent a public notice announcing the application on March 1," says Banner. "I was alarmed to see the magnitude of the project and its effort to locate to our area without any official communication to the residents," she continues. Troubled by the lack of information, Banner arranged a community meeting which drew approximately 100 participants in person and online. "Our residents are anxious by the possibility of this project coming," says Banner. "We wanted to give them an opportunity to speak out and let them know what they can do now to stop it. If the Greefield project comes, hundreds of people will have to relocate. They should have a say in this." Despite an invitation, political leaders, including Parish President Jaclyn Hotard, and Councilmembers Lennix Madere and Kurt Becnel, who support this project chose not to attend.

As of March 3, the Greenfield application for Army Corp of Engineers and DEQ was pulled from consideration. The application has not been resubmitted but Banner expects it soon will be. "We're not relying on this project going away anytime soon," says Banner. "We're going to stay on offense to make sure nothing is snuck by us again." The Descendants Project is involved with several powerful organizations including the ACLU of Louisiana and Tulane Environmental Law to make sure they achieve this goal. In addition, the organization will continue to communicate through community meetings and emails to ensure everyone is kept abreast of information and strategies. The next scheduled activity is a peaceful demonstration at the next St. John the Baptist Parish Council meeting on April 13th at 5:30pm.

For more information on the Descendants Project efforts to stop the Greenfield Grain Elevator and how to participate, contact Jo Banner at jo@thedescendantsproject.com or by calling 225-206-1993.