

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

January 21, 2013

United States Army
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Regulatory Branch
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

(504) 862-1577
Project Manager
Amy Oestringer
Permit Application Number
MVN 2012-01106-CL

State of Louisiana
Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environmental Services
Post Office Box 4313
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-4313

(225) 219-3225; Fax (225) 219-3156
Project Manager
Jamie Phillippe
WQC Application Number
WQC 120417-01

Interested parties are hereby notified that a permit application has been received by the New Orleans District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to:
[X] Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 (30 Stat. 1151; 33 USC 403); and/or [X] Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (86 Stat. 816; 33 USC 1344).

Application has also been made to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services, for a Water Quality Certification (WQC) in accordance with statutory authority contained in LRS30:2047 A(3), and provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (P.L.95-17).

PROPOSED PLANT IN ASCENSION PARISH

NAME OF APPLICANT: Methanex USA, LLC, c/o, Jacobs, Attn: Victor Kwentua, 4949 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809

LOCATION OF WORK: Section 48, T10S-R2E, and Sections 10 and 11, T10S-R2E, (30.20972, -91.02038) and in the Mississippi River, left descending bank, 185 miles above Head of Passes, in Geismar, Louisiana, in Ascension Parish, as shown in enclosed drawings

CHARACTER OF WORK: The applicant is proposing the construction of a methanol facility, to include the re-route of a portion of New River, the placement of fill in the existing New River, and installation and maintenance of a barge landing and a heavy haul road crossing the levee. The re-route of New River will require the excavation of approximately 10,560 cubic yards of earthen material for a 35-foot wide channel measuring 13,068 linear feet in length. A 10-foot wide riparian buffer will be created on either side of the re-routed channel. Approximately 1,320 linear feet of the existing New River will be filled with 10,560 cubic yards of material excavated from the re-route and will impact 1.4 acres of riparian wetlands on each side of the channel. The re-route of New River will also require the placement of two 60-inch reinforced concrete culverts. One culvert will be placed at the proposed heavy haul road crossing and the other will be placed at the proposed railroad crossing, as shown on the attached drawings.

A temporary barge landing and heavy haul road will be constructed from the Mississippi River and across the levee. Mooring for barges will be accomplished by the use of two bulldozers to be located on the bature. The outermost portion of the proposed barge will extend approximately 725 feet channelward from the levee toe. Approximately 42,800 cubic yards of fill will be placed for the construction of a 60-foot wide by 490-foot long heavy haul road crossing the levee. This work in the bature will require the clearing of 3.3 acres of wetlands. The applicant proposes purchasing compensatory mitigation credits from a Corps approved mitigation bank for all wetland impacts onsite, totaling 4.7 acres.

The comment period for the Department of the Army Permit and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality WQC will close **30 days** from the date of this joint public notice. Written comments, including suggestions for modifications or objections to the proposed work, stating reasons thereof, are being solicited from anyone having interest in this permit and/or this WQC request and must be mailed so as to be received before or by the last day of the comment period. Letters concerning the Corps of Engineers permit application must reference the applicant's name and the Permit Application Number, and be mailed to the Corps of Engineers at the address above, **ATTENTION: REGULATORY BRANCH.**

The application for this proposed project is on file with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and may be examined during weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Copies may be obtained upon payment of costs of reproduction.

Corps of Engineers Permit Criteria

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, Indian Tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether to make, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

No properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are near the proposed work. The possibility exists that the proposed work may damage or destroy presently unknown archeological, scientific, prehistorical, historical sites, or data. Copies of this notice are being sent to the State Archeologist and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Our initial finding is that the proposed work would neither affect any species listed as endangered by the U.S. Departments of Interior or Commerce, nor affect any habitat designated as critical to the survival and recovery of any endangered species.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant's proposal would result in the destruction or alteration of n/a acres of EFH utilized by various life stages of red drum and penaeid shrimp. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

If the proposed work involves deposits of dredged or fill material into navigable waters, the evaluation of the probable impacts will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Also, a certification that the proposed activity will not violate applicable water quality standards will be required from the Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services, before a permit is issued.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any other parties whom you deem likely to have interest in the matter.

JOHN M. HERMAN
Chief, Central Evaluation Section
Regulatory Branch

Enclosure