



State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

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**After Pressure from State and Local Officials, Texas Brine
Agrees to Make ‘Significant Contribution’ to Fund to Assist
Bayou Corne Residents**

PIERRE PART, La. – State and local officials this morning informed the Texas Brine Company that its original permit for the brine cavern located closest to the Bayou Corne sinkhole requires the company to assist residents who must evacuate because they are deemed to be at risk, which prompted the company to commit to making a “significant contribution” to a fund set up for this purpose.

The original Texas Brine permit for the brine cavern operation located closest to the sinkhole discovered on the property operated by Texas Brine on Aug. 2 requires the operator, in the event of development of a sinkhole and an evacuation, to provide assistance for residents in areas deemed to be at immediate potential risk.

Texas Brine has agreed to make a significant contribution to an account which will provide that assistance for residents whose homes are under the evacuation order. Texas Brine also said it will reach out to its fellow operators in the nearby area to contribute to the fund.

In addition, state and local officials advised Texas Brine that the original permit also contains provision for shutting down ongoing brine mining operations near the location of a sinkhole or subsidence. The Office of Conservation is continuing to monitor the area for developments that would necessitate triggering those shutdown provisions to protect public safety.

The company informed the state that on Monday it plans to submit its permit application for the drilling of a new well into the abandoned cavern to determine the stability of the cavern structure and what pressures, brine or natural gas it currently contains.

Department of Natural Resources staff is prepared to review and approve the application within hours of receipt to expedite the commencement of drilling. Under the provisions of orders within an Office of Conservation Declaration of Emergency, Texas Brine has until the close of business Monday, August 13, to submit its permit application, or it will face fines of up to \$5,000 for each day past the August 13 deadline that the application has not been submitted.

Louisiana State Police also committed to ensuring that Texas Brine can move its equipment in for drilling the well. The company says it will need to bring in between 30 and 50 eighteen wheelers full of equipment to the site to drill the well. LSP will take steps to ensure these assets can be moved on site quickly.

AIR QUALITY MONITORING

Remediation of diesel by Texas Brine in the area near the slurry started on Saturday, after DEQ staff met with the company to determine the process for removing the diesel.

On Saturday, DEQ officials were scheduled to conduct air monitoring via boat in the areas of bubbling in Bayou Corne and also to collect ambient air samples in Bayou Corne/Grand Bayou community.

DEQ has deployed its Mobile Air Monitoring Lab deployed for frequent air quality analyses in the community. So far there have been no detections of air pollution or water pollution that would be considered a health risk. Air quality monitoring in the areas of the bubbling n Bayou Corne also came back normal.

DEQ has conducted radiation monitoring at the site of the slurry, and there were no detectable levels for naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) on the surface of the slurry hole in Assumption Parish. This first round of data indicates to DEQ that the potential exposure of citizens to NORM is not a problem in this matter. DEQ plans to continue to provide data based on air and water sampling to local leaders and other state and federal agencies responding to the incident.

NORM is present in the earth's crust and reaches the surface through activities like oil and gas exploration or mining. It can also reach the surface through natural processes.

Scientists also took four water samples and a soil sample which will be sent to the lab for more detailed analysis. Those results will be back early next week, as DEQ has asked the lab to provide expedited analysis.

On Friday Department of Health and Hospitals State Epidemiologist Dr. Raoult Ratard sent a letter to Assumption Parish President Martin Triche which says that based on the data reviewed to date, it does not appear that chemical exposure of site-related contaminants poses a public health risk to individuals in the immediate area of Bayou Corne for the time period and chemicals sampled.

The letter also states that other potential public health hazards may exist and DHH will continue to work with state and local officials to identify those chemicals and/or physical hazards and prevent and/or mitigate any risks.

HOMELAND SECURITY

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness deployed its mobile command center to Pierre Part, near Bayou Corne to monitor this situation to ensure that local leaders have the resources and information they need to help residents. GOHSEP's mobile center joins similar efforts by Louisiana State Police and the Department of Environmental Quality.

A number of state agencies are providing support to local Assumption parish officials as they respond to the slurry site near Bayou Corne. The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness continues to coordinate communication and requests for support among local, state and federal agencies. GOHSEP is collecting information from all response agencies and providing regular updates to the parish and the public. These regular situation updates will be published on the parish's Website and also GOHSEP's site.

At the request of local leaders, GOHSEP has established an e-mail address when members of the public can ask questions of officials responding to the Bayou Corne incident. Community members can e-mail AskGOHSEP@la.gov with their questions. Community members can also post questions on GOHSEP's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/GOHSEP.

For several weeks, state, local and federal officials have been investigating reports of unexplained bubbling and tremors in the area. Last week, an area of wooded swamp located in this area began to subside, engulfing large trees and creating a several hundred foot diameter area of a slurry mixture of muddy water and soil where trees and vegetation were the day before.

Assumption parish declared a state of emergency in order to monitor and respond to the threat posed by this incident to its citizens. Last week, Governor Bobby Jindal declared an emergency

for the incident, which allows GOHSEP to pull resources from state agencies as needed to assist Assumption parish officials in responding to the incident.

LOUISIANA STATE POLICE

The Louisiana State Police continues to support public safety efforts in the Bayou Corne/Grand Bayou areas. Troop C Troopers assigned to Assumption Parish remain at the command site in order to assist local officials. Troopers stationed at the command site allow for quick closure of roadways, if the situation dictates. Troopers are also assisting with patrols throughout the evacuated area.

Troop C has assigned a supervisor to the command site as a liaison to ensure effective communication. Troop C's public information officer remains on standby to assist with getting road closure, evacuation plans, or any other pertinent information out to the media and public as needed.

LSP's Air Support Unit continues to provide regularly scheduled assessment flights over the area for parish and state officials. Air Support has flown over 20 missions.

LSP HazMat Technicians continue to monitor the incident and provide support as needed to incident command.

TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation and Development, at this time, has no concerns related to the integrity of its state roads, specifically La. 70 in Assumption Parish. However, out of an abundance of caution, DOTD engineers are continuously monitoring the state road system in this area -- 24 hours a day with roving patrols and frequent surveys. If conditions change, DOTD crews are prepared to close roads immediately to ensure public safety and will announce appropriate detours.

DOTD's engineers have conducted preliminary surveying to establish baseline measurements for approximately one mile of La. 70 near the impacted area. This allows the state to monitor variations in topography and react quickly to protect public property.

Working during breaks in the weather, DOTD has several measurements techniques that it will utilize to provide thorough and accurate data related to the impacted area in relation to the state's highway system including:

Today, DOTD crews placed control monuments or establishing a precise elevation measurement on the bridges located on La. 70 at Grand Bayou and Corne Bayou for monitoring purposes.

Additionally, crews are finalizing the control network or study area by tying topographic points together. By Monday, this data will be processed and compiled for establishing the baseline of the study area.

DOTD has provided aerial photography to GOHSEP for review and will conduct additional flyovers for comparison purposes next week.

DOTD is conducting pavement quality tests on La. 70 utilizing a deflectometer. This device helps to evaluate the physical properties of pavement and will alert DOTD if there are concerns that may not be visually evident.

NATIONAL GUARD

The Louisiana National Guard continues to conduct over-flight observations of the slurry/sinkhole area vicinity Bayou Corne at the direction of the Governor in support of GOHSEP, the DEQ and Assumption parish. The Louisiana National Guard is utilizing specially equipped aircraft using night vision capabilities to assist local leaders in monitoring the sinkhole during nighttime hours.

LANG's evening overflight observed no changes of the slurry/sinkhole. Heavy thunderstorms impeded flight operations for morning flight. LANG is prepared to continue overflights this evening.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Department of Health and Hospitals has been analyzing air monitoring data from DEQ. At this time, DHH's environmental epidemiology staff has not detected a health threat. Environmental epidemiology is continuing to work with other state agencies to monitor data and assess the situation as needed.

The DHH regional public health emergency response coordinator in Region 3 continues to work with local officials as well.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Local and state agencies are posting information and testing results online.

Assumption parish:

<http://assumptionla.com/bayoucorne>

Department of Natural Resources:

<http://dnr.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=939&pnid=0&nid=172>

Department of Environmental Quality:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/bayoucorne.aspx>

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