

In opposition to Formosa plant

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New Orleans

The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes the siting and construction of the proposed Formosa petrochemical complex on the west bank of St. John the Baptist Parish.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to hold a public hearing on the matter today at 7 p.m. in the Edgard courthouse.

Formosa Chemical plans to build first a pulp/rayon plant, then a much larger polyvinyl chloride (PVC) facility.

State and parish officials have offered Formosa a total of \$448 million in tax relief over 10 years to entice the company to come here to create jobs.

Formosa Chemical has bought the 1,800-acre Whitney Plantation and is contemplating purchase of Evergreen Plantation, much to the outrage of historic preservationists. The company is also buying out homes in Wallace, a small, low-income, black community, reminiscent of the buyouts of Reveilletown and Morrisonville, now ghost towns adjacent to Dow Chemical.

A totally unprecedented decision by the St. John Parish Council rezoned the Whitney tract from single-family residential to unrestricted-use industrial.

The local cheerleader for Formosa, Parish President Lester J. Millet Jr., has described the

rayon process as one with a raw material of wood chips and thus "very clean with no pollution. It's all clean jobs." In reality, the situation is quite the opposite.

Formosa's environmental history is notorious. It proposes to use local bottomland hardwood in vast quantities, and substantial dioxin pollution from the pulp-bleaching process is guaranteed.

The EPA is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the social, economic and other broadly defined impact of the rayon plant. Shockingly, EPA has neglected to include in its EIS Formosa's PVC facility, which is three-quarters of the proposed complex.

In addition, EPA ought to include the expected impact of the Aristech Chemical phenol and cumene plant, on the drawing board for directly across the Mississippi River from Formosa's plot.

The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club supports a diversified approach to economic development along the River Road Corridor by encouraging the recruiting of "clean industries" and supports the consideration of alternative land use and development plans.

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