

United States Army Corps of Engineers leadership:

Native People, Black people, and People of Color living in Permian Basin and Gulf Coast communities and their supporters are concerned about the impacts of existing, proposed, and recently permitted petrochemical facilities from the Permian Basin and other fracking shales to the bays of the Gulf of Mexico. We want the very best for our communities. We come together to advocate for our families, friends, and neighbors, the natural environment, language justice, a just transition to safer renewable energy infrastructure, and a livable future on the planet.

In recognition and appreciation for the US Army Corps of Engineers values to uphold “loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage” and in respect for your USACE creed “to always serve the Nation” - we are asking for your help.

**We invite you to come to meet with us and tour our Gulf Coast communities.** We want to show you both the beauty of our places and our people; and also, the facilities and potential industrial development sites that put our families’ lives, health, and quality of life at risk from poisonous air emissions, toxic leaks into our water, and deadly explosions and fires.

Due to the many projects in the permitting process and the cumulative threats that we are facing, **we respectfully request for the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to conduct a Regional Environmental Impact Statement for the Permian and Gulf South region to give a programmatic review of the infrastructure and cumulative environmental impacts of current facilities in addition to cumulative risks from proposed and recently permitted projects in total.**

Oil, gas, and petrochemical industries are rapidly expanding into residential zones. They are damaging precious wetlands and coastal areas, impacting Native and African American cemeteries and cultural sites. The lives of coastal communities and the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem are in jeopardy.

### **Cultural Sites**

We believe it is important to look at the risk of loss of culturally significant sites. Lands containing Native peoples’ artifacts indicating former villages and burial sites of Native original peoples are at risk. Fossil fuels development also disturbs the burial sites of formerly enslaved African Americans and their descendants.

### **Communities Health**

We believe it is important to look at the disproportionate risk of impacts on communities of color who live near the proposed petrochemical projects. These communities have been exposed by corporations to a heavy load of pollutants. Pipelines, storage tanks, and processing plants have been poisoning local residents for decades.

In addition, the man camps that are built bring in dangers that have resulted in the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Native Women, Girls, 2Spirit, Trans, and Masc Relatives (WG2STMR).

These man camps are full of mostly men who feel entitled to abuse and murder our Native WG2STMR, which impacts the health of our communities as these are our leaders, matriarchs, healers, lifegivers, and pillars to our communities.

In Texas alone, there are 483,571 miles of criss-crossing pipelines. That is nearly twice as vast as the square mileage of the entire state, 268,597. In Louisiana, there are over 81,000 miles of oil and gas pipelines located largely in communities of Native Original People, African Americans, and Asian Americans. Oil and gas pipelines routinely leak toxic chemicals into aquifers and rivers and those chemicals end up in our waterways.

The proposed fossil fuels buildout of new pipelines, tank farms, export terminals, and processing plants would mean more methane, benzene, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and the other toxic emissions that cause **asthma, bronchitis, cardio-pulmonary obstructive disorder, heart disease, stroke, cancer, and early deaths**. Many of our community members have pre-existing conditions. **Any additional toxic load in the air, water, and soil would be deadly to our communities' people and the wildlife. We must stop this buildout to secure the nation.**

### **Coastal Wetland and Wildlife Impacts**

We believe it is important to declare the nation's coastal wetlands as environmentally significant having rights of nature that go beyond short term profit-making. The Gulf Coast wetlands make up 50% of the wetlands in the nation. They are important carbon sinks and provide enormous ecosystem services. They serve as storm buffers soaking up rain during extreme weather events and protecting communities from flooding.

The Gulf is home to thousands of species of fish, shrimp, dolphins, birds, turtles, seagrasses, and other living beings. At risk are: 233 National Wildlife Refuges, many globally important bird sites, three major bird migration routes -- the Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic flyways and almost 300 Marine Protected Areas. The complexity of the Gulf coastline, with numerous bays, estuaries, inlets, marshes and creeks, would make cleanup from any spills or explosions extremely difficult; impacts could last for decades for much of the habitat, and some species could suffer significant long-term population declines. (American Bird Conservancy)

### **Climate Impacts**

Your Mission is to secure the Nation, and reduce disaster risk; Your *Guiding Principle* is environmental sustainability; your *intention* is restoring the environment and the Gulf of Mexico's major waterways; and your *commitment* is to sustain the environment by cleaning sites contaminated with hazardous, toxic, or radioactive waste and material. **Your Mission and Guiding Principles are imperative during this time of ever increasing climate related disasters -- probably the toughest challenge to our Nation.**

We believe that issuing new permits for polluting petrochemical facilities is in direct opposition to your values, mission, guiding principles, intention and commitments.

We are deeply concerned that a recent study shows oil and gas from the Permian Basin, if burned at home or abroad in other countries would emit **40 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, almost 10% of the remaining global carbon budget for staying under 1.5°C** the limit that could help reduce climate change disasters and wide scale loss of lives globally. ([www.permianclimatebomb.org](http://www.permianclimatebomb.org)).

All five Gulf South states are experiencing a **rapid increase** in climate related emergencies and disasters. Genocidal and suicidal construction and operation of new fossil fuel infrastructure including potential new offshore drilling from the current Gulf lease sale, would accelerate those dynamics. Our community members, wildlife, and the environment, plus existing and proposed infrastructure are at risk from extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and winter storms from climate change.

Florida has been spared, for the most part, from oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, but communities in Florida are suffering from saltwater intrusion, flooding, and other effects from fossil fuel activities in the other Gulf Coast states.

We are encouraged that the Department of Defense has formed a Climate Action Team. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said, "We face a growing climate crisis that is impacting our missions, plans and capabilities and must be met by ambitious, immediate action". **We are asking that the USACE take this immediate action.**

### **Our Communities**

There are 21 projects in various stages of the permitting process in Texas and Louisiana (see appendices attached with map). These are in addition to many facilities and infrastructure already in the Gulf.

In addition to these 21 projects, the following Gulf coast communities are overburdened and overwhelmed with the current amount of polluting facilities: in Louisiana -- St. James, Raceland, Plaquemines; in Texas -- Port Arthur, Houston, Galveston, Surfside, Freeport, Jones Creek, Matagorda Bay area, Coastal Bend Region of Corpus Christi, Taft, Portland, Ingleside on the Bay, Lower Rio Grande Valley, Garcia Pasture, Devil's River, Permian Basin, Eagle Ford Shale, and Barnett Shale; and in Florida -- Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. These diverse, Environmental Justice (EJ) communities are home to Black, Native Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Therefore, it is imperative for the USACE to consider and communicate with all communities and implement language justice through providing non-english and accessible communication and outreach in the permitting of projects.

Finally, because there are *so many* projects with coinciding and overlapping comment periods, it is extremely difficult for frontline communities to access meetings for meaningful participation and input.

**In conclusion, we invite you to join our community leaders for a meeting in consultation of the projected permitting plans and to take a tour with us of our communities. We'd like to show you in person, the petrochemical industry's current impacts to our homes, our**

community members, and the environment and to see what's at risk from any future development.

**We have faith that you will lean into your core values, mission, guiding principle, intention and commitment and conduct a Permian and Gulf South Regional Environmental Impact Statement.**

We ultimately want you to halt the permitting of new petrochemical facilities and focus on enhancing resiliency and promoting a just transition to renewable energy systems.

Sincerely,

**Community Leaders, Defend the Gulf Organizing Group, and Supporters:**

**Sharon Lavigne, Rise St. James** (St. James, LA)

**Juan Mancias, Carrizo-Comecrudo Tribal Nation**

**John Beard, Port Arthur Community Action Network** (Port Arthur, TX)

**Melissa Zamora, Indigenous Peoples of the Coastal Bend/For The Greater Good** (Corpus Christi, TX)

**Isabel Araiza, For The Greater Good**, (Corpus Christi, TX)

**Elida Castillo, Chispa Texas** (Taft, TX)

**Eduardo Canales, South Texas Center for Human Rights** (Falfurrias, TX)

**Melanie Oldham, Citizens for Clean Air and Clean Water of Freeport and Brazoria County**

**Diane Wilson, 4th Generation Fisherwoman, Activist, Author** (Seadrift, TX)

**Errol Summerlin, CAPE - Coastal Alliance to Protect the Environment** (Corpus Christi, TX)

**Patrick Nye, Ingleside on the Bay Coastal Association** (Ingleside, TX)

**Appendices I: Projects in Permitting Process. The Regional Gulf Coast EIS will account for cumulative impacts and risks of new USACE projects together with existing projects, and other new, non-USACE projects.**

- **Texas Projects in Permitting Process**

- Brownsville Area:
  - SpaceX
  - Texas LNG
  - Rio Bravo Pipeline
  - Rio Grande LNG
  - Jupiter Oil
- Corpus Christi Area:
  - Exxon and SABIC's Gulf Coast Growth Ventures
  - Enbridge in Ingleside
  - Blue Water on St. Joseph Island
- Matagorda Bay Area:
  - Max Midstream

- Upper Texas Coast:

- GulfLink in Jones Creek
- Sea Port Oil Terminal near Surfside
- Coastal Texas Study's Gate system in Galveston and Bolivar Pass
- Port Arthur LNG
- Blue Marlin Pipeline in Sabine Lake and Port Arthur

- **Louisiana Projects in Permitting Process**

- Plaquemines Parish Area
  - Delta LNG/Delta Express
  - Plaquemines LNG/GatorExpress
- St. James Parish Area
  - Formosa Plastics Plant

- South Louisiana Methanol
- Formosa Transmission Line

- Ace Pipeline
- Tallgrass Oil Export Terminal

## Projects in Permitting Process

