

Petrochemical Industries in St. James Parish, Louisiana

Problem: The majority Black residents of the 80+ mile stretch between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, called “Cancer Alley,” are subjected to disproportionately high rates of cancer, respiratory diseases and other health problems from the air and water pollution of 150 oil refineries, plastic plants and petrochemical facilities along the Mississippi River.



Background: The stretch of land that has been called “Cancer Alley ” is home to majority Black residents *and* to 7 of the nation’s 10 census tracts with the highest rates of cancer. This area, where enslaved people used to labor on plantations, is already on the frontlines of the climate crisis, regularly experiencing hurricanes, heavy rain, flooding, and extreme heat.

In 2018, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced that Formosa Plastics Group would build a massive petrochemical complex in Louisiana’s “Cancer Alley” and would receive an economic incentive package from the state. In 2020, however, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers suspended the Clean Water Act permit that would have allowed the project to be built on wetlands, in response to a lawsuit brought forth by RISE St. James and other grassroots activists.

In September 2022, a Louisiana District Court invalidated the permits issued for the construction of Formosa Plastics. One month later, the EPA called on Louisiana to examine cumulative effects of pollution from existing petrochemical plants on people who live near the proposed Formosa Plastics complex.

Current Status: Formosa says it "intends to explore all legal options" to pursue permitting of its proposed Sunshine Project, a \$9.4 billion industrial complex in Louisiana's St. James Parish.

Local Advocates: **RISE St. James** is a faith-based grassroots organization that is fighting for environmental justice as it works to defeat the proliferation of petrochemical industries in St. James Parish, Louisiana. **The Descendants Project** is committed to the intergenerational healing and flourishing of the Black descendant community in the Louisiana river parishes.



Advocacy Needed Now: Support current efforts of Rise St. James in stemming the proliferation of petrochemical industries in St. James Parish.

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1. [Black Residents of Louisiana File Landmark Lawsuit](#)
2. [Environmental racism in Louisiana's 'Cancer Alley', must end, say UN human rights experts | UN News](#)
3. [Big Oil's Last Lifeline: Part 2 - New Orleans](#)
4. [Fighting for Cancer Alley](#)