

30 YEARS ON THE FRONTLINES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Tulane Environmental Law Clinic
Academic Year in Review 2018–2019

A woman with dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved top, stands in a lush garden with green foliage. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Her hands are clasped in front of her.

From the Director

Dear Friends,

Looking back over the last thirty years what stands out are the people and the places. Hundreds of students, many now seasoned attorneys, got their start here. Thousands of clients invited us into their homes and their lives and trusted us with their concerns. Their stories stay with us. Places across Louisiana, and in Mississippi and Arkansas, stand out. Swamps, bayous, and rivers. Oak trees and sugar cane fields. Meeting halls, gyms, porches, and dining rooms. Flares, stacks, pipes, odors, tanks and silos.

Our work this past year has taken us many places, but we ended our most recent case at the scene of one of our defining struggles over twenty years ago – the proposed Shintech chemical facility in Convent, Louisiana. It was déjà vu when a foreign-owned chemical company, this one by the name of Wanhua, withdrew its plans to locate a plastics facility in Convent, less than a mile from where Shintech would have gone. The company's withdrawal followed a successful appeal we filed with the Parish Council on behalf of local residents and their partners that resulted in a reversal and remand of Wanhua's land use approval. Our clients' energized and outspoken political advocacy was widely credited as a reason for Wanhua's withdrawal. The fight never ends for these communities; an influx of petrochemical projects looms for this area. But we paused for just a moment with our clients to marvel on what they accomplished, and to be thankful. Here's to the next thirty years.

Lizal W. Jordan

TULANE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CLINIC

30 years

of legal advocacy &
experiential learning

Since 1989, Tulane Environmental Law Clinic has provided free legal representation and community-based outreach to citizens and organizations facing environmental challenges. We are a public interest law clinic, meaning that we work on cases affecting the health, rights, and/or interests of large numbers of citizens. Our student and supervising attorneys work to ensure that justice is accessible to all people, even when they cannot afford legal services or their cause is opposed by those in positions of power. In this special anniversary edition, we celebrate 30 years of legal advocacy and experiential learning at the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic.

To learn more about our work, please visit www.tulane.edu/~telc/

Student Attorneys

Over the past 30 years, Tulane Environmental Law Clinic (TELC) has graduated more than 700 law students, enabling them to learn through the experience of representing low-income community members and non-profit organizations facing environmental challenges. For many students, the Clinic program is transformative and represents their first professional experience with people who live in poverty and face systemic discrimination.

The Clinic has helped to train hundreds of lawyers who have gone on to successful careers in the federal government, state agencies, non-profits, and private practice. While not all of our students continue to practice environmental law, they all benefit from their work here ‘in the trenches,’ with a greater understanding of environmental issues and, in particular, a deeper appreciation of the courage and humanity of impoverished people fighting for environmental justice.

754 Student attorneys
graduated since 1989

ALUM SPOTLIGHT



Ruth Ann Castro
Senior Corporate Counsel
Google
TELC Class of 2000

“During my time at TELC, I contributed to an appellate brief regarding a state’s failure to meet certain Clean Air Act requirements and participated in negotiations with state and federal agencies. That experience gave me the familiarity and confidence to work on complex air issues and negotiate with environmental agencies. Today, as the Head of Google’s Environmental Health and Safety Legal group, I commonly negotiate with these agencies and often address Clean Air Act issues.”



Class of 2018-2019

Students

FALL 2018 – SPRING 2019

Brian Broussard
Henry Dahlen
Chelsea Danley
Emily Dombrowski
Julissa Hunte
Adrian Lopez
Zeke Maggard
Portia Mastin
Megan Miller
Denman Mims
Drew Renzi
William Vargas
Emily Werkmann
Margaret Wilbourne
Caelen Willie

SPRING 2019 - FALL 2019

Annie Blanc
Adrianna Culbreth
Taylor Dunne
Chandler Farnworth
Anna Ferriera
Megan Kilmer
Zachary LaMachio
Jordan Ollestad
Daniel Schwank
Margaret Stando
Amanda Taylor
Frederick Williamson
Simon Willis



Swearing In

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Each fall, at the Louisiana Supreme Court, our student attorneys swear to work toward the interests of justice, enabling them to legally represent indigent clients.

Fall 2018 students being sworn in at the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Research Assistants & Interns



Environmental challenges don't follow academic calendars, and many of our cases continue beyond the end of the school year. Summer Research Assistants help to keep cases moving between semesters. Our Research Assistants are typically in their first year of law school at Tulane and, through this experience, gain valuable foundational knowledge of environmental law. On average, half of our Research Assistants subsequently enroll in the Clinic.

SUMMER 2019 RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:
Charles Lee Wingard & Julie Schwartzwald

107 research assistants & interns mentored since 2002.

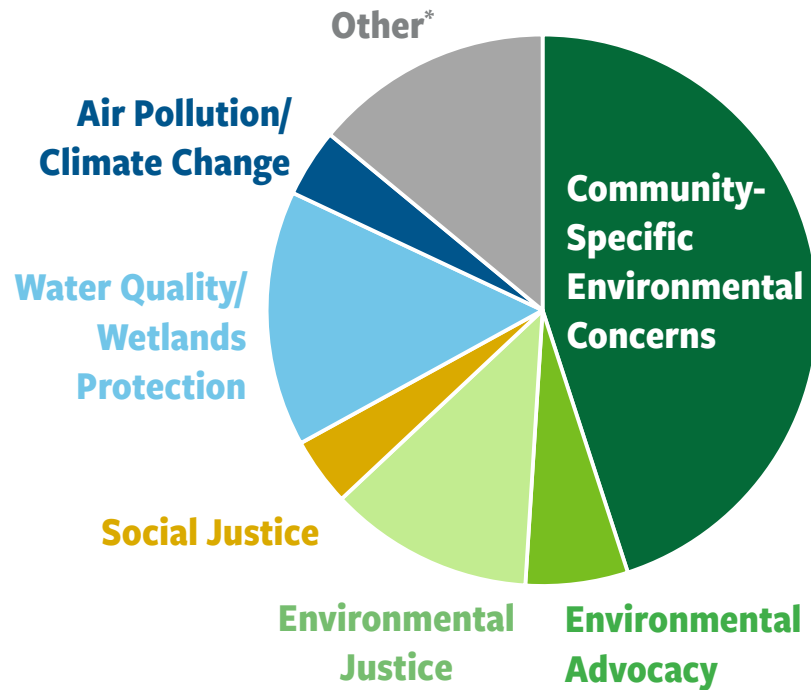


Summer interns assist the Community Outreach Program, providing support for the clinic's educational and capacity-building activities that promote environmental justice. Interns are typically Tulane undergraduates and may receive academic credit for their work, in addition to gaining fundamental skills (e.g., research, communication) that are broadly applicable across different career paths. For some undergraduates, the internship is a deciding factor of whether to pursue law school.

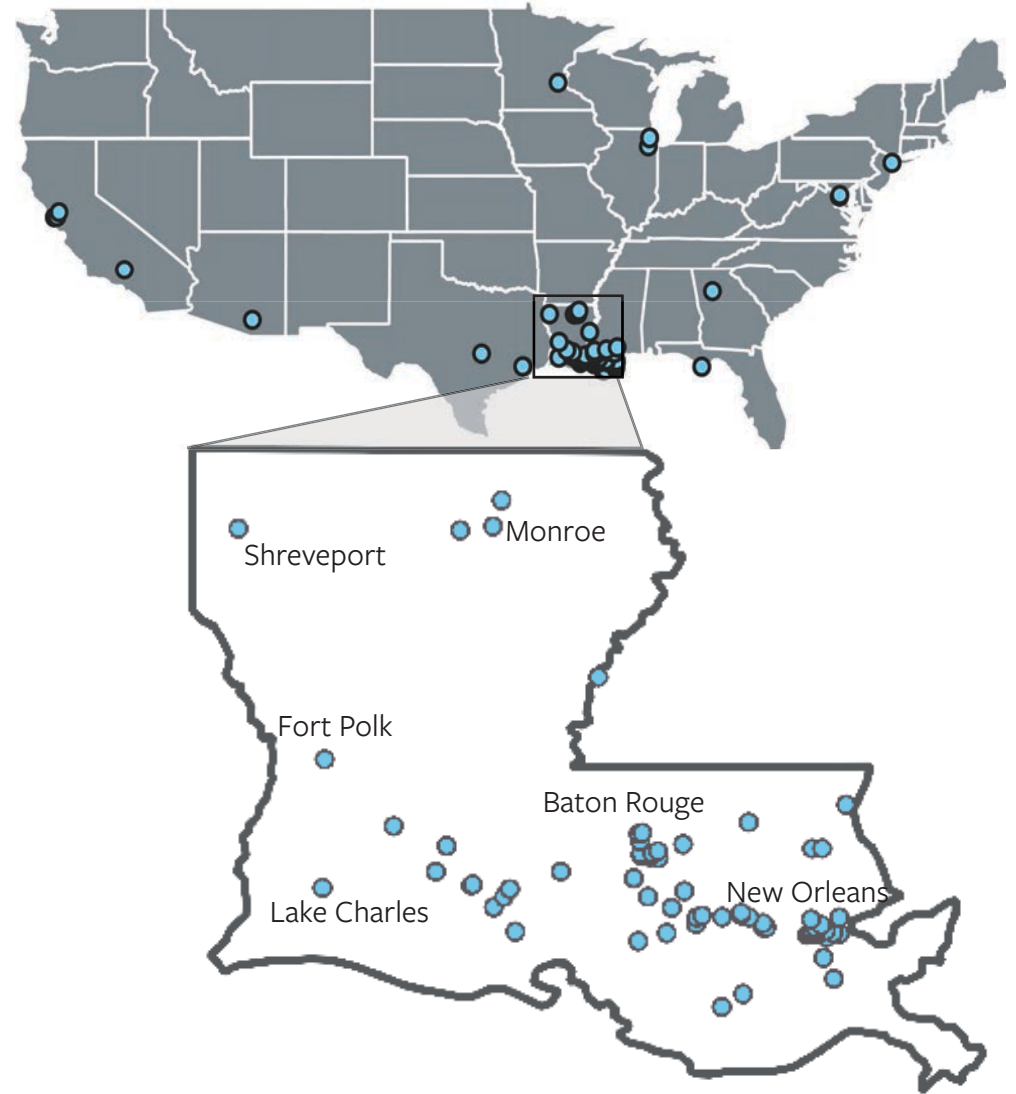
SUMMER 2019 INTERN: Katherine Deblanc

2.

WHAT is their focus?



Although most of our clients have been environmentally-focused, we have represented organizations with other missions, such as economic justice, fair housing, or historic preservation. These diverse interests serve as a reminder of the far-reaching impacts of environmental law.



3.

WHERE are they located?

ABOVE LEFT: Primary focus of organizations represented by TELC from 1989-2019. *Includes animal welfare, economic justice, fair housing, historic preservation, public health, outdoor recreation, sustainable energy, and wildlife conservation. ABOVE RIGHT: Geographic location of organizations represented by TELC from 1989-2019.

Who We Are

CLINIC STAFF



Lisa Jordan, Clinic Director
J.D., Loyola University
L.L.M., Energy & the Environment, Tulane
University | Joined TELC in 1996



Elizabeth Livingston de Calderón
Supervising Attorney
J.D., Tulane University
Joined TELC in 2006



Lauren Godshall
Supervising Attorney
J.D., New York University
Joined TELC in 2019



Kimberly Terrell
Director of Community Outreach
Ph.D., Conservation Biology
Joined TELC in 2018



Salina Masone,
Legal Assistant
M.B.A., Loyola University
Joined TELC in 2019

LEGAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Clinic's Legal Advisory Board is comprised of experts working across diverse fields of law. These advisors provide our attorneys with valuable input on our cases and approve any litigation undertaken by the Clinic. The Board operates independently of Tulane University.



Professor Paul Barron
Emeritus Faculty
Tulane Law School



Monique Harden, Esq.
Assistant Director of Law and Policy
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice



Prof. Jane L. Johnson
Emeritus Faculty
Tulane Law School



James M. Hecker, Esq.
Environmental Enforcement Project Director
Public Justice



Professor Kirsten Engel
Charles E. Ares Professor of Law
University of Arizona



Michele Merkel, Esq.
Managing Director of Advocacy Programs
Food & Water Watch



Ronald Simon, Esq.
Private Attorney
Simon & Associates

Major Victories



ABOVE: Residents of St. James Parish listen with concern at an informational meeting (organized by TELC clients) about Mosaic's plan to spray-evaporate toxic waste near their homes. Photo by Julie Dermansky.

Plan to Spray Radioactive Waste near Black Neighborhoods Is Rejected

30 Jul 2019

After we raised major public health concerns on behalf of our clients, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) denied a request by Mosaic Fertilizer LLC for a variance allowing it to spray-evaporate more than 200 million gallons of toxic, acidic, and radioactive wastewater at its plant in Romeville (St. James Parish, LA), near two black, low-income communities. Our comments (submitted June 11) revealed fundamental flaws in the proposal, including Mosaic's implausible claim that the toxic overspray would travel upwind, away from our clients' homes.

Clients: St. James Residents (Genevieve Butler and Pastor Harry Joseph), Mt. Triumph Baptist Church, Sierra Club, Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN).

Clean Air Act Settlement Helps Baton Rouge Residents Improve Home Energy Efficiency

26 Jul 2019

We entered into a Clean Air Act citizen suit settlement with ExxonMobil (suit filed Mar 3, 2016), securing funding for energy-efficiency improvements for low-income homes or public buildings in Baton Rouge, particularly those near Exxon's chemical facility.

Clients: LEAN and a Baton Rouge resident (Stephanie Anthony).

2018-2019

Residents Prevent Construction of Toxic Chemical Plant Less Than a Mile from Historic, Black Community

24 Jul 2019

In a milestone victory for local residents, the St. James Parish Council voted unanimously to overturn a Planning Commission approval for Wanhua Chemical US Operations LLC (a China-based company) to construct a new plant near two low-income, black communities already overburdened with industrial pollution.

On behalf of our clients, we submitted opposition comments (26 Apr 2019), appealed the Parish's approval of the plant (19 Jun), and refuted Wanhua's critique of this appeal (19 Jul). Through this work, we revealed key flaws in Wanhua's risk analysis for phosgene (a deadly gas to be produced on site), exposed the Chinese government's control of Wanhua, and spotlighted the company's efforts to outsource jobs/contracts and evade tariffs.

Based partly on these new facts, the Council overturned the approval and ordered a new vote. But in the midst of growing public outcry and difficult questions, Wanhua *withdrew its application*. Local officials acknowledged our clients' role in stopping the plant, with a prominent, pro-industry economist noting, "I'm not sure [Wanhua officials] were anticipating the pushback they were getting from St. James residents."

**Ourso-Landry, Annie. "Wanhua reconsiders \$1B chemical project's south Louisiana site." Baton Rouge Business Report. 6 Sep 2019.*

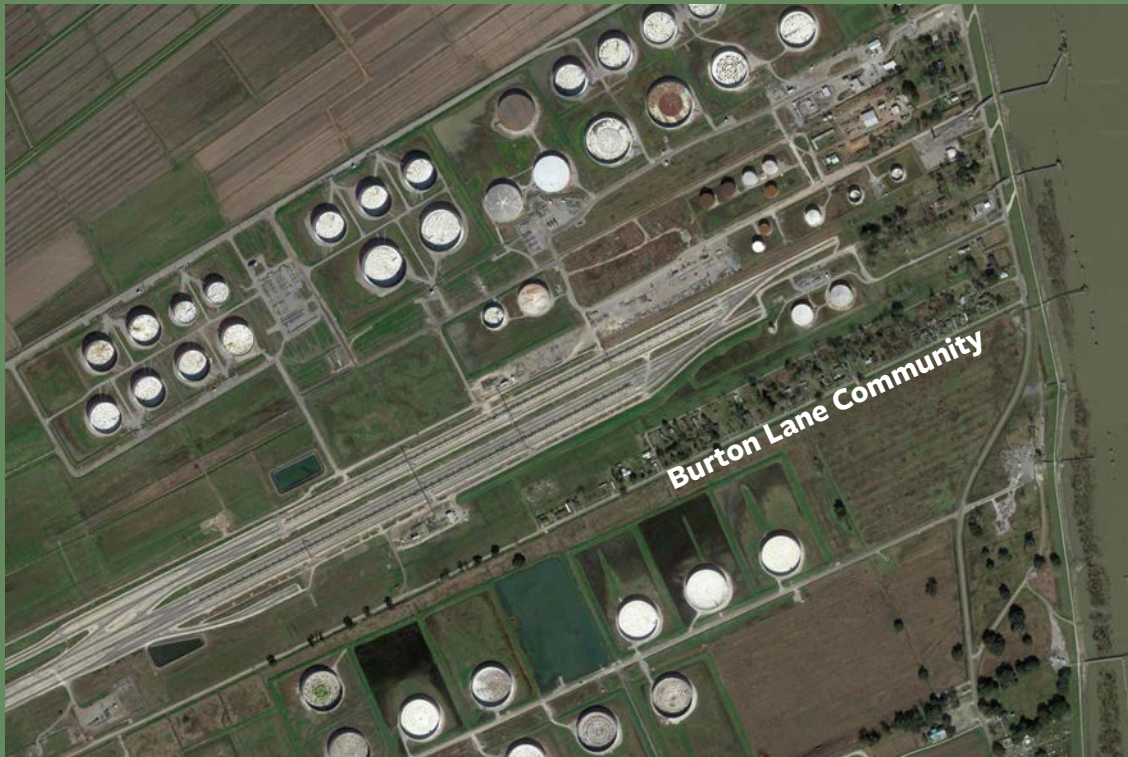
Clients: St. James residents (Genevieve Butler and Pastor Harry Joseph), RISE St. James, and Louisiana Bucket Brigade.



ABOVE: After the Planning Commission rescinded its approval for Wanhua's toxic plant, local residents Myrtle Felton (far left) and Barbara Washington (middle), shared a moment of triumph with Lisa Jordan (far right) and Student Attorneys Margaret Stando and Max Williamson (holding a copy of the Commission's Motion to Rescind.)

Major Victories

Historic Community Gains Greater Protection against Toxic Emissions from Adjacent Oil & Gas Facility



ABOVE: Oil and gas storage tanks surround the historic Burton Lane neighborhood in St. James Parish.

22 Jul 2019

We settled a lawsuit (filed Sep 6, 2018) against LDEQ over permits expanding the operations at the NuStar oil & gas storage facility located immediately adjacent to the low-income, black community of St. James (St. James Parish, LA). The settlement requires NuStar to conduct a thorough, state-of-the-art assessment to detect potential pollution from leaks or equipment malfunctions, as a first step to curtailing emissions that could threaten the health of the adjacent community.

Clients: St. James Parish residents (Genevieve Butler and Pastor Harry Joseph), Louisiana Environmental Action Network, Humanitarian Enterprise of Loving People.

2018-2019

Attempt to Lower Dissolved Oxygen Standards Is Overturned, Protecting Water Quality and Rare, Ancient Fish Species

25 Feb 2019

A U.S. District Court stopped an attempt by LDEQ to lower dissolved oxygen standards for 31 Louisiana waterways in response to a suit challenging EPA's approval of those standards (filed Feb 16, 2018). The new standards would be harmful to fish and other aquatic wildlife and would indirectly allow more pollution of these waterways from residential sewerage systems. The Clean Water Act-based lawsuit also challenged EPA's approval under the Endangered Species Act for failing to consult the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service about the impacts of the proposed standards to federally-protected wildlife like the Gulf sturgeon – a rare, ancient fish species.

Clients: Gulf Restoration Network, Little Tchefuncte River Association, Louisiana Audubon Council, LEAN, and Sierra Club.



Gulf sturgeon, Ryan Hagerty, USFWS

Residents Stop Construction of Oil & Gas Waste Facility in Their Town

30 Aug 2018

After we filed suit (Oct 6, 2017), a Louisiana court overturned a permit for a new oil and gas waste facility in the Town of Belle River on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, within the Atchafalaya Basin. The court held that the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources disregarded negative environmental, social and economic impacts of the facility when it granted the permit to FAS Environmental Services LLC.

Clients: LEAN, Concerned Citizens of Belle River, resident of Belle River (Hazel Cavalier), and Atchafalaya Basinkeeper.

Ongoing Work

FIGHTING FOR CLEAN AIR, WATER & SOIL

Louisiana is one of the highest-polluting states in the country, with 370 facilities that collectively release over 140 million pounds of toxic waste into our air, water, or soil each year.¹ Over 100 of these plants are crowded along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, in an area known as Cancer Alley.

Research indicates that cancer risk from air pollution disproportionately affects black and low-income residents of Cancer Alley.² Ongoing industrialization is exacerbating and perpetuating this injustice, as black and low-income communities continue to be targeted for new petrochemical facilities.

We represent clients from vulnerable communities who are fighting for clean air, water, and soil. We assist citizens seeking to hold companies accountable for illegal pollution, as well as residents opposing the construction of new, toxic facilities near their homes.

¹Based on most recent (2017) data from the EPA Toxic Release Inventory. <https://www.epa.gov/trinationalanalysis/where-you-live>

²Wesley, Chunrong Jia, and Satish Kedia. 2012. "Uneven Magnitude of Disparities in Cancer Risks from Air Toxics." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 9 (12): 4365–85. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph9124365>.

2018-2019

Permit Appeal Highlights Lack of Emergency Evacuation Route for Residents

St. James Parish Council, 24 Apr 2019

We appealed to the Parish Council the Planning Commission's land use approval of Syngas Energy Holding LLC's proposal for a new methanol production plant near a low-income, black community. Our appeal revealed that key information about the plant's environmental impacts was missing from the application and highlighted an ongoing issue: the lack of an emergency evacuation route for nearby residents, who are already surrounded by industrial plants. Although this appeal was denied, state air permits are required before construction of the plant can begin, providing future opportunities to represent our clients' interests on this issue.

Clients: St. James Parish residents, Mt. Triumph Baptist Church, RISE St. James, and Louisiana Bucket Brigade.



ABOVE: Sharon Lavigne, founder of RISE St. James, stands at the end of Burton Lane. Formerly a public road, this section of Burton Lane is now private, cutting off a former emergency evacuation route for nearby residents, whose homes are surrounded by industrial facilities. Photo by Julie Dermansky.

Ongoing Work

FIGHTING FOR CLEAN AIR, WATER & SOIL



ABOVE: St. James Parish residents protest the proposed Formosa mega-plant at an LDEQ hearing. Photo by Julie Dermansky.

Formosa Mega-Plant for Plastic Production Poses Major Public Health Risk

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ),
12 Aug 2019

We submitted comments opposing an air permit application submitted by Formosa (FG LA LLC) for a new Chemical Mega-Complex. This facility would emit ethylene oxide, volatile organic compounds, and other harmful air pollutants near black, low-income neighborhoods in St. James Parish, increasing cancer risks and other health risks.

Client: St. James Parish resident

Unpermitted Graphite Plant Threatens Swamp Wilderness

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), 16 Apr 2019

We submitted comments opposing Syrah Technologies LLC's failure to obtain a Scenic Rivers Permit for stormwater discharges from its graphite processing facility (Vidalia, Concordia Parish) into Bayou Cocodrie, a state-protected Scenic Stream. The graphite is sourced from a uranium mine, raising additional concerns about potential radioactive contaminants. The plant is under construction despite the absence of an air permit.

Clients: Concordia Parish resident and Save Concordia Parish

2018-2019

‘Water Pollution Trading Program’ Raises Concerns for Louisiana’s Streams & Fishermen

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ),
8 Mar 2019

We submitted comments opposing a proposed LDEQ rule that would create a statewide water quality trading program, enabling facilities to discharge more pollution than the law allows by buying ‘credit’ from another facility that pollutes below the legal limit.

Clients: Louisiana residents, LEAN, and GreenARMY



ABOVE: Fishermen in Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Arthur, Louisiana.
Photo by USFWS.

Expansion of Oil Storage & Transport Facility Threatens Adjacent Community

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), 8 Nov 2018 and 18 Nov 2018

We submitted comments against two separate air permit applications associated with the Ergon oil storage & transport facility located adjacent to a black, low-income community in St. James Parish. If granted, one permit would increase operations at the facility, while the other would create a new, adjoining facility on the same property, adding 20 tanks to the existing nine. By considering these two facilities as separate, the parent company was apparently attempting to circumvent the stricter air pollution requirements for a single, larger facility.

Clients: St. James residents, RISE St. James, Louisiana Environmental Action Network, and Louisiana Bucket Brigade

Ongoing Work

FIGHTING FOR GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

The public's right to participate in government decision-making is protected by federal and state laws that (with certain exceptions) prevent government bodies from withholding public information or meeting privately to discuss official business. These "Freedom of Information" and "Open Meetings" laws ensure that the public is fully informed and included in government decision-making.

Our Student and Supervising Attorneys work to protect our clients' rights to participate in government decision-making about environmental issues at the federal, state, and local levels. Sometimes this means submitting Public Records Requests on behalf of our clients, or suing an agency that is unjustly withholding the requested information. In other cases, we may help our clients hold their elected officials accountable for improper or secret decision-making through Open Meetings Lawsuits. By tackling these issues, our work helps ensure that environmental decisions are made through an open process consistent with American democracy.

"It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that public business be performed in an open and public manner..."

Louisiana Open Meetings Law, La. Rev. Stat. § 42:12.

2018-2019

Lawsuit Exposes Secret, Closed-Door Meeting between Parish Officials and Chemical Company Representatives

23rd Judicial District Court, filed 15 Jul 2019

We filed an Open Meetings lawsuit against the St. James Parish Council and Planning Commission over a secret meeting between these public bodies and representatives of Wanhua Chemical US Operations LLC. This closed-door meeting was held on May 17, 2019, just three days before the Commission narrowly voted to approve Wanhua's application to build a toxic chemical plant, despite strong opposition to the project from our clients and others. Now that the toxic plant has been stopped, the lawsuit can focus on achieving more transparency in how the Parish conducts public business.

Clients: St. James residents, RISE St. James, and Louisiana Bucket Brigade



ABOVE: Lisa Jordan, TELC Director, makes a case to the St. James Parish Council to overturn the Planning Commission's approval for Wanhua's chemical plant, after TELC exposed a secret meeting between the company and Parish officials just days before the approval was granted. Photo by Julie Dermansky.

Ongoing Work

FIGHTING FOR GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

Lawsuit Challenges Parish Approval – without Adequate Public Notice – of Hazardous Waste Facility near Bayou Black



23rd Judicial District Court, filed 28 Jan 2019

We filed an Open Meetings lawsuit against the Terrebonne Parish government alleging violations of the Open Meetings Law by the Terrebonne Parish Council when it approved a permit and a variance (i.e. special exemption) from the Parish's hazardous waste ordinance without proper notice for M.A.R.S. Cleaning Systems LLC. The company was seeking Parish approval to operate a facility in Gibson, Louisiana, that would process hazardous waste (containing radioactive materials) from oil and gas operations.

Clients: Terrebonne Parish resident and LEAN

LEFT: Student attorneys Daniel Schwank, Simon Willis, and Caelen Willie with Terrebonne Parish residents.

2018-2019

Public Records Requests

During the 2018-2019 academic year, we submitted 19 requests for public information on behalf of various environmental groups and concerned citizens. Collectively, these requests were submitted to federal, state, and parish government entities and sought information related to industrial plants, petrochemical pipelines, soil and drinking water contamination, environmental restoration projects, endangered species, and agency rulemaking.

While these records should be accessible to anyone, government entities sometimes fail to respond and may even attempt to withhold incriminating information. Often, simply having an attorney submit the request can facilitate the release of public records.

The importance of accessible public information cannot be overemphasized. For many of our clients and community partners, knowledge is power.



ABOVE: Eve Butler, Beverly Alexander, and Anne Rolfes review documents related to ongoing environmental injustices in St. James Parish. Photo by Julie Dermansky.

Community Outreach

For 30 years, our Community Outreach Program has empowered concerned citizens and environmental groups through education and capacity-building that strategically complements our legal work. Our Program Director provides customized, community-based training across broad areas related to environmental advocacy, including how to: access key types of public information, report environmental problems, ask relevant questions of decision-makers, identify strengths and limitations of scientific research, comment effectively on environmental permits or policies, develop compelling talking points, respond effectively to media questions, and research environmental laws.



ABOVE: Director of Community Outreach, Dr. Kimberly Terrell (far left), with a delegation of environmental justice advocates working in India, Lisa Jordan (TELC Director, center right) and TELC research assistants (Lee Wingard and Julie Schwartzwald, second and third from right). Dr. Terrell coordinated the delegation's visit as a learning exchange opportunity through the New Orleans Citizen's Diplomacy Council.

Importantly, this community-focused training is available to anyone – even those for whom the Clinic does not take on legal representation. Thus, our Community Outreach Program allows the clinic to reach a broader client base and have a larger positive impact than what could be accomplished strictly through legal assistance. At the same time, the Program gives our clients tools that can help facilitate legal victories or minimize legal setbacks.

Empowering Local Residents through Non-Legal Research and Fact-Finding

Upon request, our program staff conducts (non-legal) research to empower community members with fact-based knowledge related to their environmental concerns. Often, this entails researching technical/scientific questions and presenting information to community members in a way that is easy to understand.

Because many of our Clients are concerned about industrial pollution, we commonly provide facts about the known health risks of specific pollutants associated with particular facilities. Through our Community Outreach Program, we provided this type of information in many of the cases covered in this report, including the Formosa mega-plant and the M.A.R.S. scrapyard. Our Program Director conducted extensive research related to the proposed Wanhua chemical plant and Mosaic's toxic waste plan, in conjunction with the Clinic's legal work (see 2018-2019 Major Victories). She identified major concerns with each project, including apparent flaws in risk analyses for toxic pollutants, and communicated this information through 'Town Hall' events organized by our clients. Importantly, this information was also used by local media and by our Clinic Attorneys in their legal comments to environmental decision-makers.

The importance of case-specific, factual knowledge to our community partners cannot be overemphasized. These facts empower communities by allowing them to make more specific, detailed comments to decision-makers and the media. This approach is especially important for communities fighting multiple, or ongoing environmental injustices (e.g., Cancer Alley), where separate issues may become blurred, or decision-makers may become apathetic to recurring, generic environmental concerns.



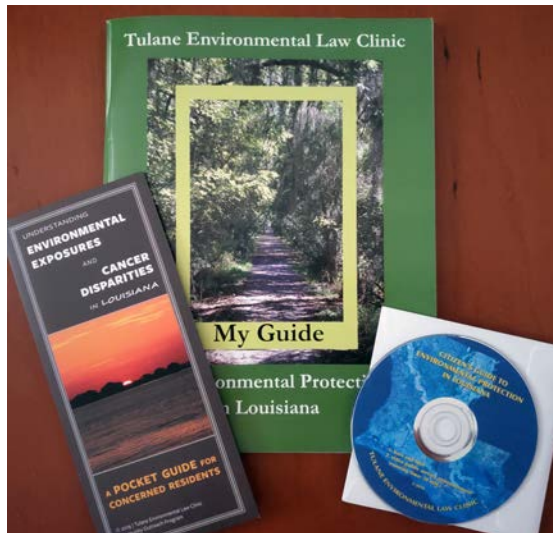
ABOVE: St. James residents and members of environmental groups discuss strategies for commenting on the Formosa mega-plant, which would produce plastic, proposed in the Parish. Research conducted by TELC's Community Outreach Program helped inform comments from several members of this group. Photo by Julie Dermansky.

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Community Outreach

PROGRAMS

Educating Louisiana Residents with “My Guide to Environmental Protection”



Since 1991, our Community Outreach Program has provided Louisiana citizens with a no-cost guidebook for engaging in environmental decision-making. Originally titled the “Citizen’s Guide to Environmental Activism in Louisiana”, this booklet has become more comprehensive – and vastly more intelligible to ordinary citizens – over the past three decades of revisions. Now titled “My Guide to Environmental Protection in Louisiana,” the booklet is a key resource for countless concerned citizens, with guidance on how to 1) stay informed about environmental issues, 2) take action to protect the environment, 3) build support for your cause, and 4) find environmental laws.

Upon request, our Program Director provides formal (e.g., workshops) or informal (e.g., phone conversations) training based on the “My Guide.” In-person trainings are always located within the community, and all trainings are tailored to the specific needs of the citizen or community group. In summer 2019, the Program Director mentored an undergraduate intern who updated the “My Guide,” improved the readability of certain sections, and added information about common industrial pollutants and their associated health risks.

Our outreach materials are available at no cost to any citizen concerned about environmental issues. Electronic copies are available online at <http://www.tulane.edu/~telc/>. Paper copies may be obtained by emailing TELCoutreach@tulane.edu or calling 504-865-5757.

Fighting Industry Misuse of Data about Cancer Alley Communities

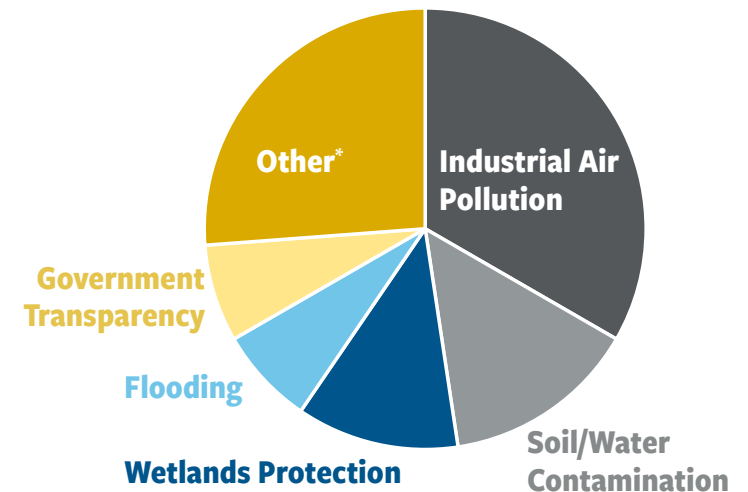
In June 2019, our Program Director developed a “Pocket Guide for Concerned Residents” that focused on “Understanding Environmental Exposures and Cancer Disparities in Louisiana.” The guide provides current statistics about Louisiana’s cancer burden and tips for discussing/understanding scientific information about cancer. To date, nearly 100 of these guides have been distributed to Cancer Alley residents.

Connecting Citizens with Legal Resources

Over the past academic year, we screened 42 requests for legal assistance (about one per week). Most (88%) were from Louisiana-based groups or citizens. Half of the requestors were reaching out to the Clinic for the first time and had heard about the Clinic either by word of mouth or through our Community Outreach Program. Industrial air pollution was the most common issue represented by the requests, followed by water/soil contamination and wetlands protection. We received smaller numbers of requests related to a broad suite of other issues. Our decisions whether to provide the requested representation are based on factual and legal merit, the availability of student attorneys and other resources, and whether the request is consistent with the Clinic's public interest and educational missions.



What's Your Environmental Concern?



ABOVE: Focus of requests for legal assistance from Tulane Environmental Law Clinic during the 2018-2019 academic year. *Includes agency rule-making, interstate construction, mineral rights, permitting assistance, public waterway access, toxic exposures, and wildlife health.

LEFT: Community Outreach Director, Dr. Kimberly Terrell (bottom left) meets with Dean Wilson (Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, bottom right) and residents of Grand Lake (Iberia Parish) to learn more about their environmental concerns, after they requested TELC legal assistance.

Moments in History



1989 - 2019



Thank You



Linda Swanner, Legal Assistant

After 20 years of service to Tulane Law School, Linda retired in February 2019. She is now spending more time with her family, traveling, and creating beautiful paintings. We are deeply grateful to Linda for her years of support and the cheerful optimism that she brought to the Clinic every day.

Corinne Van Dalen, Supervising Attorney

After 14 years at the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, Corinne left in May 2019 to pursue an exciting opportunity at Earthjustice's newest office in New Orleans. We wish Corinne the best and are delighted that she will still be in New Orleans and fighting for environmental justice.



Machelle Hall, Supervising Attorney

After 8 years at the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, Machelle left in July 2019 to relocate to Baton Rouge, where she now works at the Attorney General's office. We will miss Machelle and the outside-the-box, resourceful approach that she brought to the Clinic.



Old Friends & New Beginnings

For our Clinic, this was a year of transitions and opportunities. Three of our long-time Clinic members departed from TELC to embark on new life journeys. We sincerely thank our departing colleagues for their service to the Clinic and our Clients. In February 2019, we planted a baldcypress tree at Woodlands Conservancy (Belle Chasse, Louisiana) to commemorate the retirement of our beloved legal assistant, Linda Swanner.



Thank You

Our program depends in large part on funding from private grants and donations. **We thank our present and past funders for their support. Without them, our work would not be possible.**

Major Funders

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EVOLVE FOUNDATION
WILLIAM B. WIENER JR. FOUNDATION
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In-kind contributions by Julie Dermansky. jsdart.com

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Student attorney Emily Werkmann explores Maurepas Swamp, while a green treefrog (the Louisiana State Amphibian) hitches a ride.

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