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## PRESS RELEASE

### **St. James Parish Residents Seek EPA Review of Proposed Settlement that would Fine Nucor Steel Plant Pennies per Pound of Toxic Emissions.**

**New Orleans, October 28, 2021:** Inclusive Louisiana, together with residents of St. James Parish and the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, submitted an overfiling [petition](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), requesting that the EPA amend a recently proposed settlement between the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and Nucor Steel Louisiana LLC (Nucor) to hold the steel plant accountable for its long history of unpermitted emissions of toxic and harmful air pollutants. The proposed settlement would fine Nucor \$89,760.32 for emissions violations that occurred from 2014-2018. This fine amounts to just 28 cents per pound of excess toxic air pollution emitted by Nucor and does not account for Nucor's more recent and ongoing air permit violations.

The proposed settlement details 20 pages of air permit violations that Nucor committed in the 5-year period since it began operating in 2014. The violations include the unpermitted release of a total of 42,520 pounds of sulfuric acid (also called battery acid) and 279,020 pounds of hydrogen sulfide into the air, less than a mile from the community of Romeville. Recent documents obtained from LDEQ indicate that Nucor has continued to release unpermitted amounts of sulfuric acid and hydrogen sulfide. Inclusive Louisiana submitted comments in opposition to the proposed settlement in July 2021, but, as of today, has received no response from LDEQ.

Sulfuric acid and hydrogen sulfide are toxic air pollutants known to damage the lungs and other body systems, even at low levels. The residents maintain that Nucor's emission of sulfuric acid, which corrodes metal, is responsible for the corrosion of their recently-purchased metal roofs and vehicles. "Nucor has been polluting since they got here," says Inclusive Louisiana founding member and lifetime Romeville resident Myrtle Felton. Ms. Felton sought help from Nucor for her roof damage, but Nucor denied any responsibility. During Hurricane Ida, the damaged roof collapsed and Ms. Felton's home became – and remains – uninhabitable. Ms. Felton notes the stark disparity, "Today, I'm homeless, while Nucor continues to profit from spraying sulfuric acid into our community."

The proposed settlement does not require Nucor to admit fault, to upgrade its facility, or even to inform nearby residents when the facility is releasing excessive pollution. The residents maintain that 28 cents per pound of toxic air pollution is will not discourage future violations. In the first six months of 2021, Nucor's parent company, Nucor Corporation, reported net sales of \$15.81 billion and net earnings of \$2.45 billion.

Nucor is currently permitted to emit 26 different toxic air pollutants, as well as other harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases. In July 2020, Nucor applied to modify its air permit and increase its emissions of most of these pollutants. Based on the most recent application documents, submitted in July 2021, Nucor seeks to increase its permitted annual emissions of sulfuric acid and hydrogen sulfide by nearly 60,000 pounds and over 50,000 pounds, respectively. LDEQ has not yet decided whether to grant Nucor's permit application.

In the absence of any meaningful action by LDEQ to enforce its own environmental laws and permit limits, Inclusive Louisiana has petitioned directly to the EPA. Overfiling petitions are a means to directly request that EPA step in and review Clean Air Act violations that are not being adequately addressed by a state environmental agency. Inclusive Louisiana's petition to the EPA addresses the shortcomings of this settlement and asks the EPA to exercise its authority under the Clean Air Act to investigate, assess, and impose all available penalties against Nucor until the company is fully compliant with the terms of its permit. Tulane Environmental Law Clinic represented the St. James Parish residents on the petition. The St. James Parish residents are also requesting to meet with an EPA representative to discuss Nucor's history of emissions violations.

At the St. James Parish council meeting on October 27, 2021, the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, on behalf of residents of St. James Parish, spoke before the council to address Nucor's history of permit violations and the dangers associated with Nucor's emissions. The residents requested that Council Members send a letter to the EPA in support of the recently-submitted petition. The Council has not yet issued a formal response.