

# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

[November 1, 2019](#)

## The Most Polluted Spots in Louisiana Are Getting Worse

A new series by ProPublica, The Times-Picayune, and The Advocate is detailing the state of industrial pollution in Louisiana decades after the passage of pollution control laws and efforts to reduce pollution from the scores of plants along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans – known as “Cancer Alley” or “The Petrochemical Corridor” (if your paycheck comes from certain sources). There’s a new boom in industrial expansion in the Gulf Coast fueled by cheap oil and gas coming from the fracking boom. And in Louisiana, where belief that encouraging (and providing tax incentives for) industrial expansion will make the state rich is a political bedrock for both parties, there’s nothing to slow it down. Also, pay no attention to the fact that this industry has been enthusiastically encouraged since the 1950s, and, [last time anyone checked](#), Louisiana is still [decidedly not rich](#).

The reporting so far has focused on air pollution around poor communities like [St. Gabriel](#), but veteran reporter Mark Schleifstein [notes](#) that these industries have a hand in not just air pollution, but water pollution and hazardous waste, as well – and the trend is going the wrong way. Expect more of this reporting in coming months. If you’re interested in learning more, [those handsome devils](#) over at the [Tulane Center for Environmental Law](#), are hosting [an event](#) with the investigative team behind this work at Tulane Law School on Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:00. Between now and then, more [details](#) will emerge, but expect, at the very least, a panel discussion about this important topic – a topic that has already garnered international [coverage](#) in addition to this new effort.

## You Think the Tide is High Now?

Both the immortal [BTO](#) and the scientists behind a new [report](#) in *Nature Communications* have bad news for you. Basically, this study used a different way of figuring elevation around the world than a commonly-used method that gets confused about actual ground elevation in areas of heavy vegetation and dense population. Using this new method, as well as the already established sea level rise projections, this study shows [far bleaker prospects](#) for little towns such as Ho Chi Min City, Mumbai, and Shanghai. The authors estimate that by 2050 340,000,000 people will live below high tide lines. Of course, about 110,000,000 people already live below high tide lines, thanks to protective measures like levees and seawalls. Basically, the report envisions some combination of things happening in the next three decades – mass migration out of low-lying areas, mass investment in infrastructure to keep the ocean out of low-lying areas, and radical shifts in what are acceptable ways of living with water.

The **Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy** is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

### Coming up:

[Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation Conference](#)  
November 3-7; Mobile, AL

[The Green New Deal Talk](#)  
November 4; New Orleans, LA

[Free Film Screening: Green](#)  
November 5; New Orleans, LA

[Governor’s Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation](#)  
November 6; Baton Rouge, LA

[Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission Meeting](#)  
November 7; Baton Rouge, LA

Manchac Swamp Reforestation Planting Event  
November 8 & 9; Akers, LA

[Rising Sea Levels & Climate Change | How Tulane is helping!](#) November 13; New Orleans, LA

[Virginia Coastal Policy Center Resilience Conference](#) and [Virginia Aquaculture Conference](#)  
November 15 and 16, 2019; Williamsburg and Newport News, VA (respectively)

### Water jobs:

[Postdoctoral Fellowship in Climate Change Law](#): The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University; New York, New York

[Freshwater Project Manager](#) or [Stormwater Retention Project Manager](#)  
The Nature Conservancy; Harrisburg, PA and Bethesda, MD (respectively)

[Postdoctoral Fellowship](#)  
National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC); Annapolis, Maryland

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Additionally, there could be radical change in the world economy that not only drastically cuts greenhouse gas emissions, but even makes large scale carbon capture more than just vaporware and much of this could be avoided. But, well, you [already know](#).

### **[What's Cooler Than Being Cool? Ice Cold! And This News!](#)**

Now for some (mostly) good news! We usually think of rivers as sources of carbon emissions. Well, okay, scientists who think about carbon emissions usually think of rivers as sources of carbon emissions. But it turns out maybe their [thinking on this has been very uptight](#). Sure, temperate rivers, with all their biological activity breaking down organic materials, are usually carbon emitters, but [new research](#) found the headwaters of [rivers comprised of glacial melt waters are big-time carbon sinks](#). [Big time](#). These streams have very little biological activity, but are rich in sediments that are rapidly undergoing chemical weathering, and absorbing carbon as they do so! See? [Cooler than being cool](#).

Of course, the whatever-is-the-opposite-of-a-silver-lining is that glacial melt streams need glaciers. And glaciers are rapidly becoming an endangered feature on the earth's landscape. Don't believe people in southern Louisiana know about much about glaciers? Then believe this [photography project from Iceland](#).

### **[This Land Is My Land, This Land Is Your Land](#)**

From the California town of Arrowhead  
From Poland Springs, Maine to many other waters  
This water is given away to Nestlé.

That [bottled water is problematic](#) is nothing new, but what really gets our goat here at Chateau d'Eau, is the legal squiffiness of reducing a public thing like groundwater down to something private to be sold back to the public for billions of dollars without paying to the public anything approaching its value in the first place. It's a profitable enough line that Nestlé now peddles 51 different bottled water brands and sold more than \$7.8B of bottled water worldwide last year. And some of [Nestlé's neighbors are getting tired of it](#). It feels like the laws are on the books in most states to keep water extraction for private profit from getting out of hand. In practice, however, it seems as though the laws are getting read in terms as favorable as possible for the private bottling companies. Lawyers for communities trying to preserve their aquifers are fighting a good fight for their clients, but they could use more help in the face of the millions of dollars being spent on lobbying for bottled water companies. So save an aquifer and buy a reusable water bottle, or a senator, or a regulating agency.