



June 2, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On January 26, 2021, when you addressed the nation from the White House, you referred to the industrial corridor that spans from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, Louisiana as "Cancer Alley." This harmful term creates a dangerously false narrative with implications that could negatively impact our state and region for years to come. As Parish Presidents from this region, we respectfully ask that you discontinue the use of three-decade-old false rhetoric that is highly harmful to our state and local economy. As elected leaders of the region, our priority is the health and safety of our residents.

Decades of health data compiled by the Louisiana Tumor Registry, an award-winning data aggregator administered by Louisiana State University's School of Public Health, demonstrates that overall Industrial Corridor cancer rates are no different than those in the rest of the state. Contributing factors for cancer such as high rates of smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, and lack of access to health care resources are more prevalent in Louisiana than in many other states. Cases of cancers attributed to environmental exposure rank near the bottom of this list for Louisianans.

The 2020 County Health Rankings Report issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation corroborates these results. Further, the report demonstrates that parishes in Louisiana's Industrial Corridor actually have better overall health outcomes than the rest of Louisiana.

Businesses gravitate to our parishes due to our unique position along the Mississippi River. In addition to river accessibility, our area is home to four Class 1 rail lines, an international airport, and ample natural resources for manufacturing such as natural gas, oil, salt, and sulfur. Companies invest billions of dollars to locate in our parishes. That investment and business operation is the foundation of our parishes' development and continues to be a significant factor in our growth and economic development.

The revenue generated by the industry is crucial to our parishes. In 2019, the oil and gas industry generated more than \$4.5 billion in state and local tax revenue, directly impacting our parishes. The chemical industry alone generated nearly \$1 billion in taxes and fees for local governments, which was enough to support 40 percent of wages for public school teachers in our state. Collectively, industries in our region generate up to 90 percent of *ad valorem* taxes and upwards of 50 percent of sales tax

revenue in our parishes. This tax base supports our education system, law enforcement, and provides critical funding for things such as clean drinking water and flood protection.

In addition to being essential to the nation's energy stability and security, the oil, gas, chemical, and manufacturing industries create more than 100,000 direct jobs throughout Louisiana. These jobs pay an average of \$149,000 a year, over three times the national average (\$51,000) and more than four times the average in Louisiana (\$41,260). With benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off, these jobs create an opportunity for our residents that pay dividends for generations to come.

The United States has some of the most stringent environmental laws in the world. Over the last 30 years, air emissions in Louisiana have decreased by 70 percent. Companies located in our region continue to develop innovative solutions to minimize emissions and reduce their carbon footprint through significant investment in research and development to improve and modernize their processes.

Industrial businesses have a vested interest in contributing to the stability and progress of the communities in which they operate. They and their employees contribute tens of thousands of volunteer hours of charitable work and millions of dollars to philanthropic activities that improve the quality of life of our residents. Quite simply, the chemical, oil and gas, and manufacturing industries enhance our communities.

Your words matter. We ask that you please discontinue using the inaccurate term "Cancer Alley," and we invite you to visit our region to see firsthand the benefits industry has provided to our communities.

We appreciate your review of this information and stand ready to promote South Louisiana's value to the nation and world. **Science shows that industry is not the driving force of cancer rates in the river region.** Please help us discourage using the term "Cancer Alley" as we work together toward a healthy, sustainable, and innovative future.

Most Respectfully,



Matthew Jewell
St. Charles Parish President



Pete Dufresne
St. James Parish President



Clint Cointment
Ascension Parish President

CC: Senator Bill Cassidy
Senator John Kennedy
Representative Steve Scalise
Representative Troy Carter
Representative Clay Higgins

Representative Mike Johnson
Representative Julia Letlow
Representative Garret Graves
Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards