



## Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

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### JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

State of Louisiana News Desk #: 225.358.5361

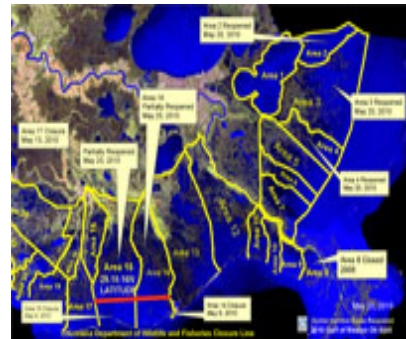
#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2010

### DHH Reopens Additional Oyster Harvesting Areas

*No Intrusion of Oil Yet; Reopening Allows Harvesters Additional Time to Gather Oysters*

**BATON ROUGE** - The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals announced today that it has partially reopened oyster harvesting areas 14 and 15, and all of areas 2, 3 and 4 to give harvesters as much time as possible to harvest their product before any potential impact from the BP oil spill in the Gulf.



[Click on the map to view full size](#)

Areas 14 and 15, which are west of the Mississippi River in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes, were originally closed May 8, 2010. Areas 2, 3 and 4, which are east of the Mississippi in St. Bernard Parish, were originally closed April 30. All areas were closed as a precaution in anticipation of oil intrusion. There has been no intrusion as of yet in reopened or partially reopened areas, and DHH officials continue to monitor the areas, as well as an entire 8-million acre area off the Louisiana shoreline.

In addition to continued monitoring, oyster harvesters "taste test" the oysters as they are pulled from the water to make sure their product is good. Harvesters and dealers test oysters in order to provide the most wholesome product and highest-quality product available to the public.

DHH Secretary Alan Levine and State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry on Wednesday signed the orders to partially reopen areas 14 and 15 north of the

29.10.16 N latitude line, and areas 2, 3 and 4.

DHH officials have been working closely with local, state and federal agencies to monitor the oil plume that continues to grow off of the Louisiana coastline for its potential impacts on oyster harvesting areas.

In addition to regular testing schedules, DHH scientists and engineers are conducting enhanced testing of oyster meat taken from the closed beds to monitor the presence of oil. Oysters being harvested in areas open for harvesting have been deemed safe by DHH.

Areas 8, 17 and 28 remain closed. The portions of areas 14 and 15 south of the 29.10.16 N latitude line also remain closed. Areas 5, 6, 7, 9 and 13 were recently reopened. Closures will remain in effect until officials have determined that environmental conditions are within the requirements specified by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

The public is encouraged to call a toll-free hotline, 1-800-256-2775, to report the presence of oil or an oil sheen.

For more information related to the oil spill, visit <http://www.emergency.louisiana.gov>. Connect with us on [www.facebook.com/GOHSEP](http://www.facebook.com/GOHSEP) and on Twitter @GOHSEP. View photos in from the state's response efforts at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lagohsep>.