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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 2, 2010

DHH Partially Closes Additional Oyster Harvesting Areas Due to Oil Spill

Officials Continue Aggressive Testing

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals announced today the partial closures of oyster harvesting areas 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in response to the BP oil spill in the Gulf.

The partial closures of areas 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 follow the concurring closure parameters from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and are east of the Mississippi River in Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes.

DHH Secretary Alan Levine and State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry signed the closure order, which will take effect at sunset today, Friday, July 2, 2010.

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 sanitarians are conducting enhanced testing of oyster meat taken from the beds to monitor for the presence of oil. Oysters being harvested in areas open for harvesting have been deemed safe by DHH.

Areas 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 29 and 30 remain closed. In addition to the partial closures of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 today, areas 9, 10, 17, 19 and 21 remain partially closed. All other areas are open.

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 and on Twitter as @GOHSEP. View photos from the state's response efforts at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/laqohsep>.

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