

<https://wgno.com/news/moving-new-orleans-forward/rise-st-james-gets-un-endorsement-in-environmental-fight/> with great broadcast segment interviewing Sharon Lavigne

RISE St James gets UN endorsement in environmental fight

St. James Parish, La.— A group in St. James Parish got a big boost this week when a United Nations Human Rights panel sided with them in condemning the building of a massive new plant.

For several years the group RISE St. James has been fighting against a proposed Formosa plastics plant to be build in the parish.

Sharon Lavigne, founder of RISE says, “When we found out that our governor John Bel Edwards approved a 9.4 billion dollar industry to come into St. James Parish, that caused the fight.”

While such a heady corporate investment might be seen as good economics for the parish by some, RISE says that they already live with a crowded field of petrochemical plants along the river that they say has impacted generations of their families’ health.

According to Lavigne, “It’s not good because its going to cause sicknesses and eventually it will cause death.”

In response to a request by the Loyola Law Clinic, a United Nations Human Rights panel in Geneva, Switzerland called the project’s approval ‘environmental racism’ and says *the federal regulations have failed to protect the people here.*

[Click here to read the UN report](#)

“I think the UN is very good in their finding and I think that’s a star in our crown, that we will defeat Formosa,” said Lavigne.

Defeating the giant that is Formosa is a tall order, but many environmental groups have sided with RISE St. John. On the other hand the deep pockets and political leadership have lined up on the side of industry.

Senator Bill Casssidy recently said that President Biden’s use of the term ‘cancer alley’ to describe this region was a slam on our state.

Lavigne has this to say to the senator, “I challenge him to come to St James and sit here for 2 hours and tell me how he feels after that.”

Last year, work on the plant was paused when graves of enslaved people were found on the property. The result is that the area was fenced off and that section won't be built upon. As for the Formosa plant, the project is in its early stages, but the work continues