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TEXAS RECEIVES LACKLUSTER “C-” FOR WATER QUALITY PROTECTIONS

Gulf Restoration Network Report Card Reveals Poor Water Quality Policy Gulf-Wide

HOUSTON, TX- The Gulf Restoration Network released its “**Clean Up Your Act!**” report card today, grading each Gulf State on their water quality policies. The results are disappointing, with a Gulf-wide average grade of “D+.” Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas have received unsatisfactory grades for their failure to fully incorporate the Clean Water Act into their state regulations. The report grades the Gulf States on issues including water quality standards, policies to prevent Dead Zone-causing pollution, public health protection, and facilitating public participation in the policy-making process.

In the areas assessed by the report card, Texas received a “C-,” “Texas’s below average performance is due to the fact that the Texas Council on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) isn’t doing enough to protect the State’s bayous, lakes and rivers,” stated **Matt Rota of the Gulf Restoration Network**. “It is critically important that Texas steps up its game and fully protect humans and wildlife from water pollution.”

Although Texas performed well in some areas, TCEQ has much room for improvement. Among other failings the report indicates that Texas has failed to implement policies that set specific criteria for nitrogen and phosphorous pollution. This pollution is responsible for harmful algal blooms that cause dead zones off the Texas coast and create hazards for human health, as well as aquatic wildlife. “Texas has to do more to head off nutrient pollution,” said **Ellis Pickett, the Texas Organizer for the Gulf Restoration Network**. “All citizens have a right to swim and surf in clean water, and getting these protective measures on the books is a vital step to cleaning up Texas’s water.”

Other areas where Texas earned low grades included not protecting all of its waters for fishing and swimming, as well not making public documents accessible enough to interested citizens. The report indicated that Texas could improve its grade by establishing specific, numeric limits on nitrogen and phosphorous pollution. Texas is also nine years late in holding a federally mandated review of its water policy, a deficiency that earned the state a “D” in the area of public participation.

The full report can be reviewed at the Gulf Restoration Network's website, www.healthygulf.org.

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The Gulf Restoration Network is a diverse network of individuals and local, regional, and national groups committed to uniting and empowering people to protect and restore the natural resources of the Gulf region for future generations. Founded in 1994, the GRN has members in each of the five Gulf states.