

## LaRouche to Bush: Overturn DDT Ban

*This press release was issued by the LaRouche in 2004 Presidential campaign committee on Aug. 16, 2002.*

Lyndon LaRouche, pre-candidate for the Democratic Party Presidential primary in 2004, today called for overturning the ban on DDT, in the public health fight to repel the West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne disease vectors.

He said, “The banning of DDT was always based on scientifically fraudulent assertions. And there’s no reason that the President of the United States should not intervene now, to force through measures to re-introduce DDT. Maybe the United States isn’t producing it any more, but other countries are. I, personally, call on the President of the United States to take necessary measures to overturn

the banning of DDT, taking into account the fact that the argument for banning it was always fraudulent. We can not kill people for the sake of condoning a fraud—as we should have learned from the Enron case.”

As of August, 38 of the continental states report the presence of West Nile virus in mosquitoes. The Gulf Coast states are the hardest hit by infection and deaths. Mosquitoes flourish in the Gulf sub-tropics, and in recent years, health measures have been drastically cut under the budgetary constraints in Louisiana, Mississippi, and nearby states, and by lack of Federal public health infrastructure.

The use of the pesticide DDT, discovered in the 1940s, was banned in the United States in 1972, based on fraudulent claims that it caused harm to the environment. In fact, it is rightly regarded as the most life-saving man-made chemical in history, during the decades of its concerted use. Today, over 200 million new cases a year of malaria occur, in the absence of DDT to fight insect-borne diseases. (A review of the DDT story is in *21st Century Science & Technology*, Fall 1992, “Environmental Hoaxes Kill; Save the Earth with Technology.”)

School of Public Health and Tropical Diseases, with a long history of expertise in battling mosquito-borne illness, particularly malaria. It was founded in 1834. But impoverished state and local governments have abandoned anti-mosquito programs. The U.S. Gulf Coast and Southeastern states are on the watch list for other mosquito-borne diseases, including dengue (haemorrhagic fever) and various forms of encephalitis.

Martin Rowland, a New Orleans civil engineer contacted Aug. 22, reported that there has been a general mobilization of spraying trucks, draining of stagnant water, and other measures, since the West Nile outbreak, but stressed, “In recent years, the budget outlays for precautionary sanitation measures were reduced below the minimum needed.” He reported large numbers of broken water culverts, walls, and decaying structures, with pools of standing water, where the mosquito-breeding hazards are obvious. This is especially dangerous in New Orleans, a delta city in the sub-tropical latitudes.

Rowland estimated \$1 billion in water and sewer infrastructure is required to make the water system of greater New Orleans safe. In the midst of the West Nile emergency there, pre-scheduled public hearings took place in August, on the proposal for sewer rates to double in the next five years, to help defray \$600 million in urgent sewage treatment repairs the City Council and Sewerage and Water Board want to start. The big international water privateer companies—Vivendi Universal (U.S. Filter), Suez (United Water), RWE-Thames Water (American Water Works), and others—have attempted to cajole the beleaguered city to sell off the entire New Orleans

water works to private interests. But the debacle of Enron and the other energy privatizers has politically tainted such privatization bids, and the sell-off idea is now on hold.

In Atlanta, where the city waterworks was sold off in 1999 to United Water, there is now a growing movement to cancel that 20-year contract.

### Follow-Up LaRouche’s Call for DDT

Rowland said that the New Orleans situation required the ban on DDT use be ended. He said that the worst infestation and cases of illness are appearing to the north of the city, where there is a more rural environment with large swampy areas, and a vulnerable, sparsely settled population. DDT is more effective, and above all longer-lasting, than its substitutes in such areas in particular.

On Aug. 15, David Hood, Louisiana Secretary of Health and Hospitals, declared that the state would go into deficit-spending to fight mosquitoes—allowed because the Governor has decreed a state of emergency over the West Nile virus. The state will spend \$3.5 million, matching the \$3.5 million advanced by the Federal government. The Air Force has come in to assist with spraying, but the process is hampered because they cannot fly at night (too much risk of hitting power lines and other features), when the house mosquito—a main disease carrier—is active. There are 60 types of mosquito in Louisiana; 40 can carry West Nile, and the main two types have been identified. Counties are now in the process of applying to the state Office of Emergency Preparedness, hoping for funds to carry out various spraying and related measures.