



Far-Left 'Together Baton Rouge' Leads Attack

Will Exxon Sour on BR?



Baton Rouge, looking north from the State Capitol to Exxon. Aerial photo by Charles Breard for Capital City News

Baton Rouge's Largest Taxpayer May See Fewer Reasons to Stay

Woody Jenkins
Editor

BATON ROUGE - Last Thursday, the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board voted 5-4 against a resolution to grant an Industrial Tax Exemption on \$67 million in capital improvements at the Exxon Refinery in Baton Rouge.

Exxon's tax exemption was unanimously approved by the State Board of Commerce and Industry, but under rules put in place by Gov. John Bel Edwards without a vote of the legislature, each local governing authority that levies a property tax has the ability to deny the tax exemption.

The Metro Council will vote on whether to grant Exxon an ITEP exemption on the taxes it levies at 4 p.m. this Wednesday.

The tax exemption is on 80 percent of the capital investment. So 20 percent goes on the tax rolls immediately but 80 percent won't go on the rolls for 10 years. Tax exemptions are traditionally approved for all industries that meet the regulations.

However, a far-left group called Together Baton Rouge, organized by Saul Alinsky's national organization Industrial Areas Foundation, targeted Exxon in Baton Rouge for denial. A number of liberal churches in Baton Rouge

See EXXON on Page 6

EBR School Board Votes to Kill Exxon Tax Exemption

The State Board of Commerce voted unanimously to approval a 10-year exemption from property taxes for 80 percent of a \$67 million investment Exxon has made at its Baton Rouge Refinery. However, under new rules approved by Gov. John Bel Edwards, each local taxing agency can disapprove the tax exemption. Together Baton Rouge, an arm of Sol Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation, urged the EBR School Board to oppose the exemption and they did by a 5-4 vote.

Approve Standard Industrial Tax Exemption for Exxon

Voting FOR (4) Mark Bellue, Connie Bernard, Jill Dyason, and Mike Gaudet (all R)
Voting AGAINST (5) Dawn Collins, Tramell Howard, Evelyn Jackson-Ware, and Dadrius Lanus (all D) and David Tatman (R)

As Registrar Compares Every Signature, Spring Election for St. George Is Unlikely

Woody Jenkins
Editor

BATON ROUGE — In an interview with the *Capital City News*, East Baton Rouge Parish Registrar of Voters Steve Raborn said his office is busy processing signatures on petitions for the incorporation of the City of St. George. However, it is slow-going, he said, and he does not anticipate completing his work in time to meet the March 11 deadline for placing the referendum on the Spring 2019 election ballot.

The registrar received the petitions from the St. George movement on Oct. 15, but his office was busy with its duties related to major elections in November and December. "Since mid-December, we've been analyzing how we will proceed and we have started the process in a small way," he said.

The registrar requested an Attorney General's opinion on how to handle issues involving certification of the petition. The Attorney General responded to that request, and the registrar said he is following the AG's opinion.

Raborn said his office has several major tasks:

- Make sure the person who signed the petition was registered to vote and living in the proposed City of St. George at the time of signing. "There's no way to do that quickly," he said. "We have to look at several screens per voter, and it is a tedious process."
- Make sure the signature is not a duplicate.
- Make sure the person signing provided all required information.
- Compare the handwritten signature with the signature on record.

- Determine if the voter is on inactive status.

The registrar has no specific deadline to meet in certifying the petition. Once certified as having sufficient signatures, it is transmitted to the governor's office.

The registrar said his office should be able to complete its work well before the July 9 deadline to get propositions on the fall ballot.

However, delays at the governor's office or as a result of litigation could conceivably prevent the St. George referendum being on the ballot this fall, Raborn said.