

LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2008

Department of Health and Hospitals Update

State Issues Precautionary Closures of ALL Oyster Harvest Areas

Baton Rouge - The Department of Health and Hospitals has closed ALL oyster harvest areas from the Mississippi State Line to South West Pass Vermillion Bay as a precautionary measure in anticipation of the adverse effects of Hurricane Gustav. This precautionary closure prohibits oyster harvest from all state waters and is effective today, September 2, 2008 at official sunset.

The areas that have been closed are known to oyster fishermen as Harvest Areas 1- 28. These areas will be re-opened as soon as it is determined that these areas meet the criteria established by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

Alan Levine, DHH Secretary, and Dr. Jimmy Guidry, State Health Officer, today signed the order to close Oyster Harvest Areas 1-28.

This precautionary closure will remain in effect until there is confidence the waters are free of bacterial contamination that could affect the safety of eating raw oysters.

The Louisiana Oyster Task Force also is in support of this precautionary closure.

Water standards for oyster harvesting are set by the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference and can be found at www.issc.org. DHH has the authority to close these waters under LSA-R.S. 40:5,3.