



RUTGERS HEALTH

Center for Environmental  
Exposures and Disease

## Protesters travel to NJ, challenge Formosa Plastics over pollution claims

TED GOLDBERG | AUGUST 2, 2024 | BUSINESS, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Activists came to U.S. headquarters, speaking out against pollution issues related to PVC production. Six were arrested



[https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/protesters-travel-to-nj-challenge-formosa-plastics-over-pollution-claims,](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/protesters-travel-to-nj-challenge-formosa-plastics-over-pollution-claims/)

Formosa Plastics has raised the ire of protesters hoping to bring more attention to the company's history of pollution in Texas, Louisiana and Vietnam.







*An aerial shot of the Formosa Plastics facility in Point Comfort, Texas.*

*Formosa Plastics Group Mallao Industrial Complex, Yunlin.*



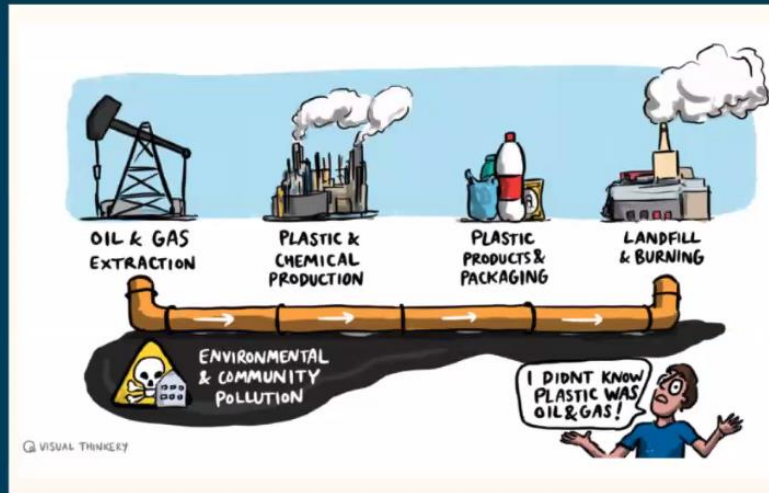
*A Serial Offender of Environmental and Human Rights |*

## The Lifecycle of Plastics Production and Its Impact on Environmental Justice Communities: A Case Study of Formosa Plastics

Overview of Plastics Production from raw materials to end-of-life  
Focus on Environmental Justice Impact on vulnerable communities

- Extraction
- Production
- Distribution
- Use
- Disposal

# Urgency of Plastic Pollution

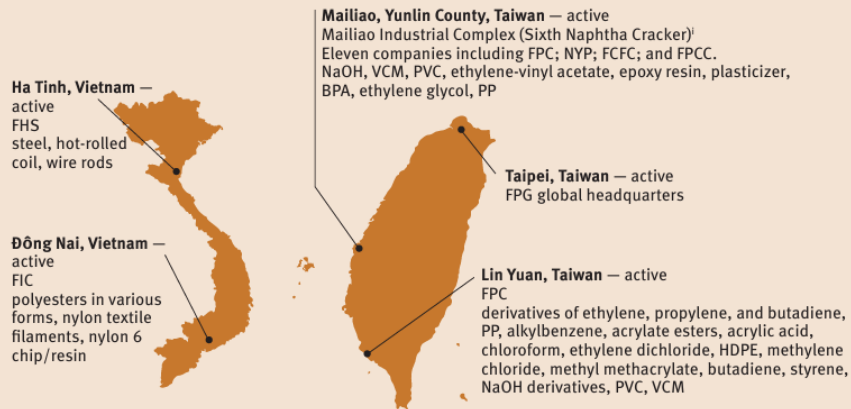
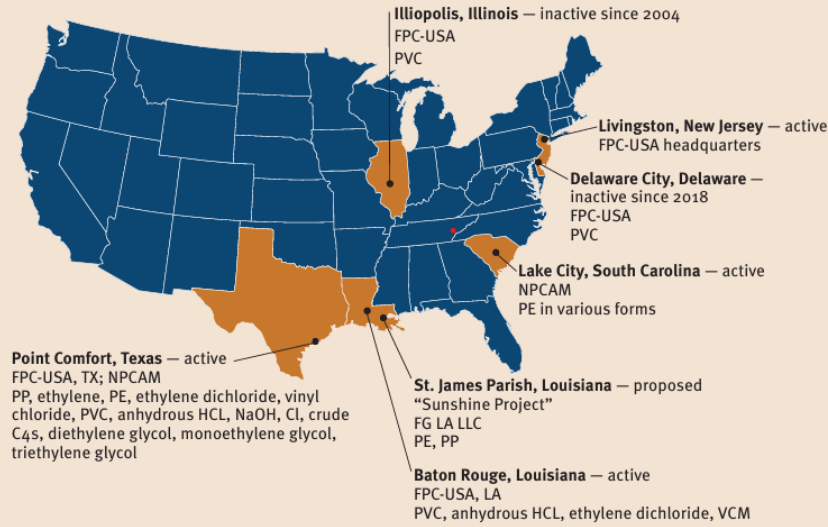




**BOX 2:**  
**Formosa Plastics Group at a Glance**

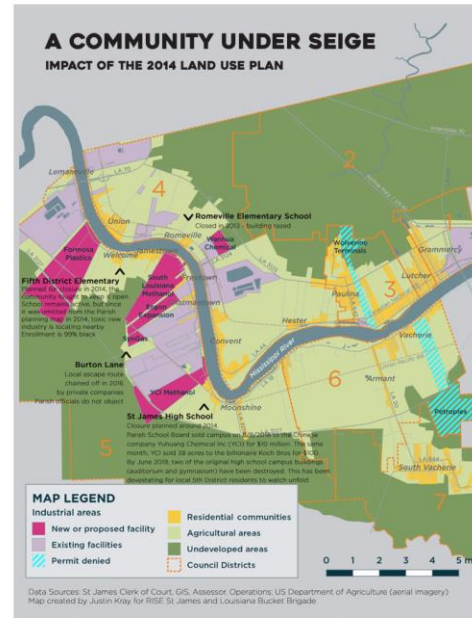
Headquarters: Taipei, Taiwan • Number of Employees: 115,929<sup>57</sup>  
Market Cap: \$103.194 billion (as of Sept. 29, 2021)<sup>58</sup>

**MAP KEY**  
Location — status of the plant  
Common name (if there is one)  
Companies operating at the site  
Select products produced at the site



<sup>i</sup> In some of the sources cited in this report, this facility is called the "Sixth Naphtha Cracker" or the "Six(th) Light Project", referring to the fact that it was the sixth facility built in Taiwan to crack naphtha from light oil into olefins.

FIGURE 4: A Community Under Siege



A Serial Offender of Environmental and Human Rights | 14

# Overview of Formosa Plastics Taiwanese conglomerate

## Global presence in the petrochemical industry

## Impact on vulnerable communities



Smoke from a Formosa Plastics facility in Yunlin County, Taiwan.

**BOX 7:**  
**Justice Delayed: Victims of Toxic Discharge in Vietnam Await Their Day in Court**

Residents and fisherfolk in Vietnam affected by the Formosa Ha Tinh Steel disaster have persistently fought for justice, despite continued pressure from the company and the government to back down. Following the discharge, nearly 8,000 fisherfolk filed a lawsuit against Formosa Plastics in Taiwanese court, alleging violations of the rights to work, health, and life. The company contests the court's jurisdiction over the case, so the court has yet to hear the complaint on its merits.<sup>368</sup> An organization representing victims of the disaster submitted a complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Council documenting illnesses, food insecurity, and even deaths related to the discharge. The complaint alleges violations of victims' rights to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, to health, food, livelihood, information, freedom of expression and assembly, and effective remedy.<sup>379</sup> After receiving a submission from the same organization,<sup>380</sup> several United Nations Special Rapporteurs — human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council — sent a joint communication to the government of Vietnam concerning the disaster.<sup>381</sup> These actions have yet to deliver justice for the victims of Formosa Plastics in Vietnam.





Community Voices in Louisiana

Local Leaders and Activists

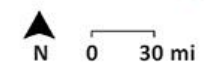
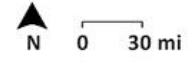
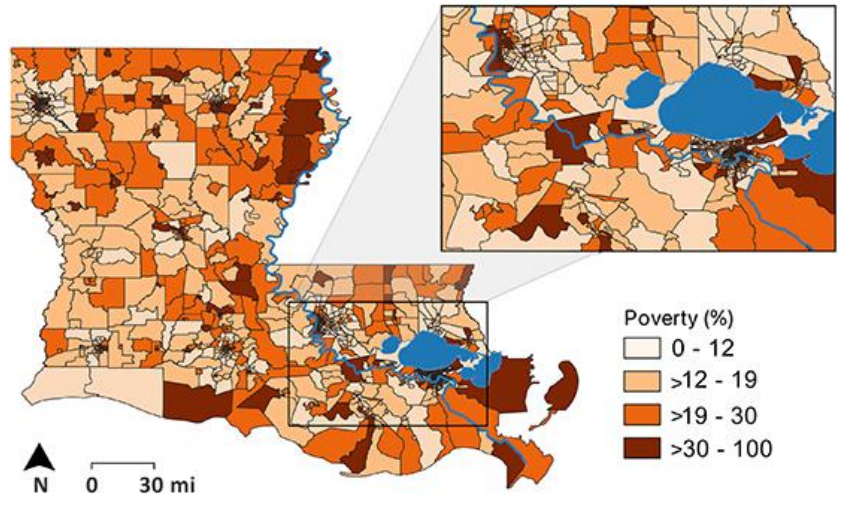
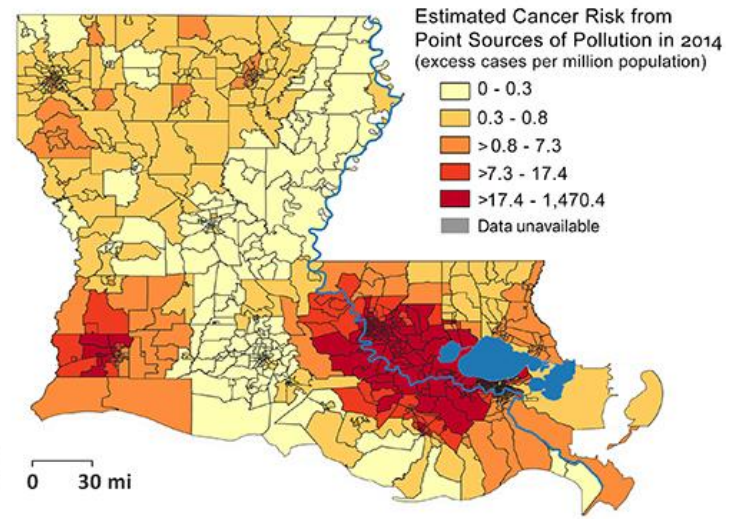
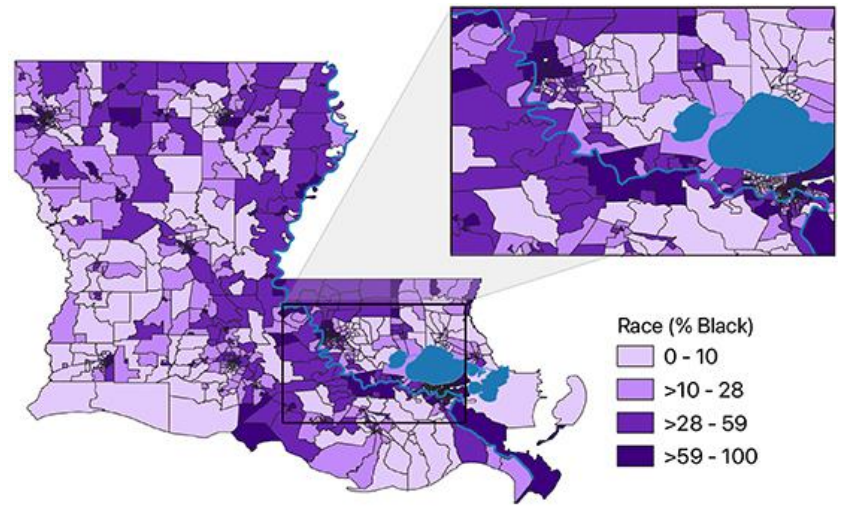
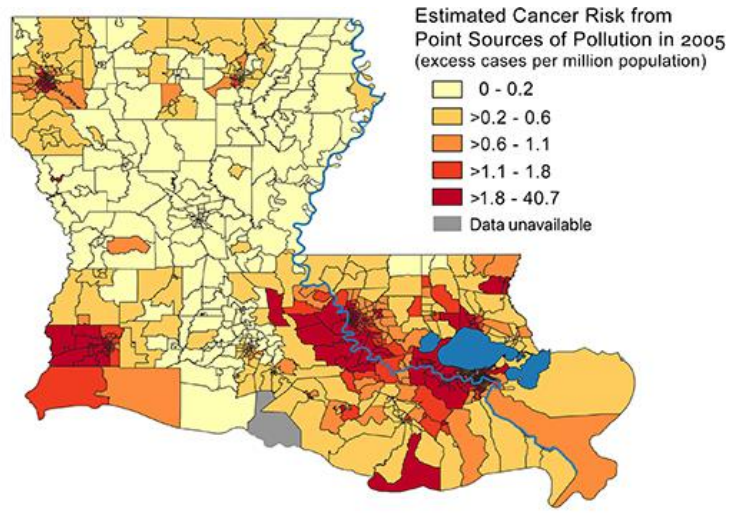
Sharon Lavigne and RISE St. James

Advocacy and resistance efforts

Impact on Vulnerable Populations

Disproportionate effects on historically marginalized communities





# Formosa Plastics makes plans to move forward with \$9.4B petrochemical complex

FEBRUARY 5, 2024 9:31 AM

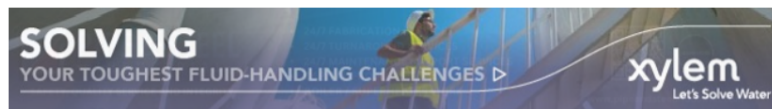


The Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeals has overturned a lower court ruling, paving the way for Formosa Plastics' massive \$9.4 billion petrochemical complex in St. James Parish.

The ruling comes despite concerns about environmental justice and the project's potential impact on predominantly Black communities.

The proposed plastics plant, which was first announced in 2018, drew immediate opposition from environmental groups and residents, who argued that the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) had been "arbitrary and capricious" in issuing permits without sufficiently considering the cumulative effects of additional pollution on residents' health.

Formosa's Sunshine Project consists of 10 plastic-making facilities across 2,400 acres in St. James, promising jobs and economic growth.















Small, Unreasonable and Persistent: Good Trouble



Fishing Communities

- Historically, largest exporter of shrimp in the USA
- Vietnamese, Latino, and workingclass commercial fishermen



## Formosa Plastics, Texas

- 1989 kicked out of Taiwan and move \$3 M plastic expansion to Texas
- Largest in Texas history
- No Environmental Impact
- No questions asked on environment
- Expedited permits and visas
- \$250 M in tax abatements







Civil Disobedience: A reasonable woman adapts herself to the world , but an unreasonable woman persists in trying to make the world adapt to herself. All progress depends on an unreasonable woman









## The Big Plastic Hunt



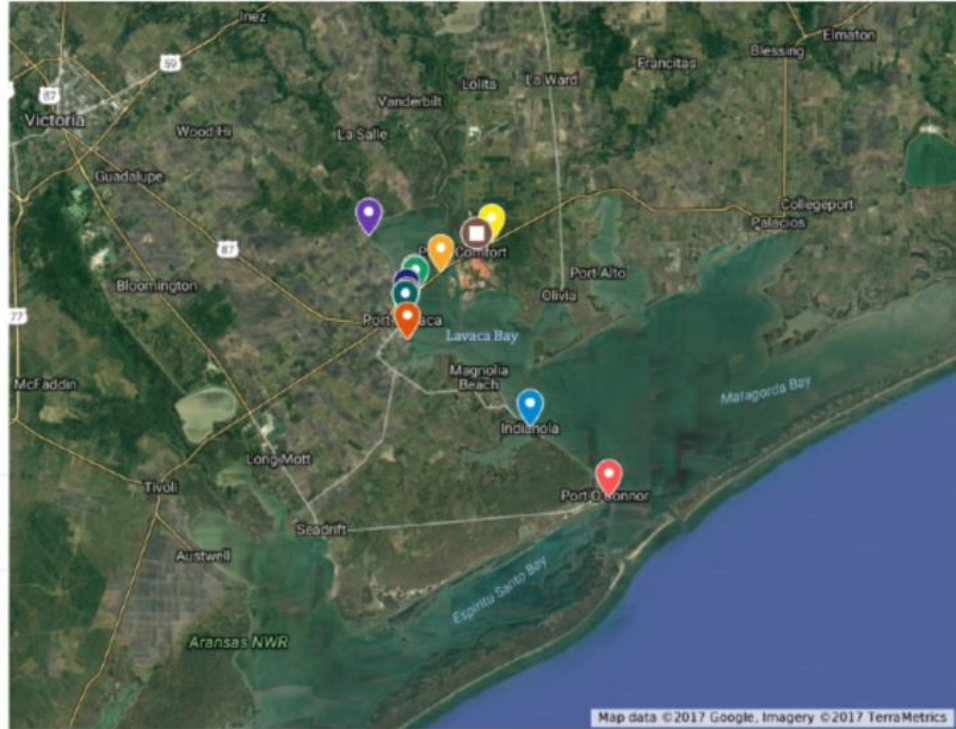
## Plastic Pellets Sampling Locations

### Sampling locations

- North Side Causeway
- Six Mile Park
- Holiday Inn Express Beach
- Lighthouse Beach
- Lone Star RV Park
- Marina Boat Ramp
- Marina Harbor
- Marina Playground
- Poor Boy Bait Stand
- Refuge Harbor
- Indianola Beach
- Cox Creek
- Port O'Connor jetties

### Formosa Plastics

- Formosa Plastics





# Plastic Pollution in Lavaca/Matagorda Bay & Cox Creek

Two and ½ years of  
sampling







# Plastic Evidence for Citizen Clean Water Suit

- 2500 samples





Zero Discharge of Plastic, Clean Up, Enforcement, Monitoring  
\$50 M settlement

San Antonio Bay Estuarine  
Waterkeeper vs

Formosa Plastics, Texas and Formosa  
Plastics Corporation, USA

## **None of the \$50 million settlement will be awarded to the plaintiffs.**

The settlement funds will be paid out over five years into a fund that will support projects that reverse the damage of water pollution in Texas's Calhoun County.

### **Some of those projects include:**

- **\$20 million for creating a cooperative** that will revitalize depleted marine ecosystems and **develop sustainable fishing, shrimping and oyster harvesting.**
- **\$10 million for environmental development of Green Lake park**, the 2nd largest natural lake in Texas, into an environmentally sound public park.
- **\$2 million to control erosion and restore beaches** at Magnolia Beach.
- **\$5 million for environmental research** of San Antonio and Matagorda bay systems and river deltas that feed into them.
- **\$1 million to support the “Nurdle Patrols”** at the University of Texas's Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve, and to give scholarships to allow persons throughout the Gulf coast to attend Nurdle Patrol conferences. The brainchild of the Reserve's director Jace Tunnell, the Nurdle Patrols are volunteer groups that collect plastic pellets, also known as nurdles, in order to document and research plastic pollution of the Gulf and its shores.
- **\$750,000 to the YMCA** for camps for children to study and learn how to be good stewards of the local marine environment.