

IMPACTS OF THE HYUNDAI STEEL PROJECT

August 26, 2026



Hyundai has applied for an air pollution permit to build a 1,700-acre steel mill in Modeste, Louisiana, in Ascension Parish's planned RiverPlex MegaPark beside the Mississippi River. Almost 300 people live within three miles of the proposed plant, 70 percent of whom are people of color. Over 7,000 people live in the nearby historic town of Donaldsonville. Hyundai would radically transform the residential area into an industrial landscape.

POLLUTION

According to the [plant's draft permit](#), the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is proposing that the plant be permitted to release:



196 TONS

per year of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), which can enter the lungs and blood and trigger heart and asthma attacks.



336 TONS

per year of sulfur dioxide (SO_2), which can damage the lungs and cause coughing, throat irritation, and acid rain.



824 TONS

per year of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), which contribute to smog, coughing and lung damage, and feed toxic algal blooms in waterways.



123 TONS

per year of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which also contribute to smog and can cause eye and throat irritation and increased risk of cancer.



6,205 TONS

per year of carbon monoxide (CO), which can deprive blood of oxygen and cause dizziness, headaches and, in high concentrations, death.



7,580 POUNDS

per year of hydrochloric acid (HCL), which can cause irritation of the eyes, skin, and lungs.



1,760 POUNDS

per year of lead (Pb), a neurotoxin that can damage the nerves, immune system, heart and brain, with infants especially vulnerable.

OTHER KEY FACTS:

- **QUESTIONABLE NUMBERS:** In estimating impacts on local air quality, Hyundai appears to have gamed the system by saying they would use wind data from the Baton Rouge Airport, but then switching it to New Orleans International Airport, which is nearly twice as far away (48 miles vs. 25 miles) and not representative of local conditions. This change resulted in estimated pollution levels from the Hyundai plant being lower than they would be in reality.
- **PUBLIC SUBSIDIES:** The Hyundai plant is set to receive **\$2.6 billion** in taxpayer subsidies and tax breaks, which means \$2 million in taxpayer subsidies for each of **1,300 jobs** created. Instead of sending this money to Hyundai, based in Korea, this public money could (for example) build more than 80 new public elementary schools in Louisiana.
- **NO GUARANTEES:** The state has no mechanism to guarantee that these jobs will be created or that they will go to local residents. When Nucor Steel Louisiana built a steel mill nearby St. James Parish in 2011-2014, the company promised a similar number of jobs, but only created 270, according to a government report.
- **CARBON CAPTURE:** The Hyundai steel plant would be permitted to release 1.6 million tons of greenhouse gases annually, as much as 348,000 cars and trucks driving for a year. However, this limit is based on a best-case scenario assuming largely unproven carbon sequestration technology that the company is proposing to build. So the amount of greenhouse gases released could be significantly higher.
- **NOT GREEN:** Although the project has been sold as “green,” Hyundai, in its permit application, admits that the plant will be fueled with natural gas because “green” hydrogen is not cost-effective to replace natural gas.

VOICE YOUR OPINION

A public hearing on the pollution control permit for the plant will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1, at the Lemann Memorial Center Gymnasium, 1100 Clay St., Donaldsonville, LA. Comments can be submitted [online via this link](#) by September 2.

Sources

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- Nucor steel promised jobs numbers: NRW Global Business, “Ground Broken for Nucor Steel Plant in Louisiana,” March 7, 2011. Link: <https://businessfacilities.com/ground-broken-for-nucor-steel-plant-in-louisiana/>
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- Louisiana Economic Development, “Hyundai Steel Mill in Louisiana,” accessed August 24, 2026. Link: <https://www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/hyundai-steel>
- Sam Karlin, “How secret negotiations led to a \$2.6 billion incentive deal for Hyundai’s Louisiana plant,” Louisiana Advocate, June 5, 2026. Link: https://www.nola.com/news/hyundai-louisiana-steel-tax-incentives-nda/article_18cc9a50-e2a0-4461-a20e-86814db6a487.html