



**Institute for Energy Economics
and Financial Analysis**
IEEFA.org

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Petrochemicals: The Final Frontier for Fossil Fuel Survival?

Petrochemical plants and projects are being promoted as a lifeline for the struggling oil and gas industry. But there are red flags in the plastics sector both in the U.S. and globally. Investors need a rethink.

Speakers:

Sharon Lavigne, Founder and President, RISE St. James

Tom Sanzillo, Director of Finance, IEEFA

Moderator:

Lisa Anne Hamilton, Adaptation Programs Director, Georgetown Climate Center

Archived presentation:

<https://app.swapcard.com/event/energy-finance-2020-conference/planning/UGxhbm5pbmdfMTA3NzY5>

Q & A*

Questions for Sharon Lavigne:

1. In your experience with RISE St. James, what do you believe are the most effective actions for a community to take to combat environmental racism and secure an equitable future? (Joshua Castigliero, Researcher, Applied Economics Clinic)

Sharon Lavigne: It takes unity, consistency, and organization when battling environmental racism. It may be a difficult task but it is possible. All things are possible when you put God first.

2. What are the things [we environmental advocates] have done in Louisiana that have been most impactful [in a positive way]? That have gotten the most people on our side. (Jane Patton, Senior Campaigner, Center for International Environmental Law [CIEL])

Sharon Lavigne: We have put human faces on the environmental issues here. We allowed people to SEE US and see WHO WE ARE. We are no different than anyone else. We are human beings who deserve fresh, clean air. Our children deserve fresh, clean air. All we want to do is live and breathe without the toxins, without jeopardizing the future of our community any further.

3. How can bigger nonprofits (conservation organizations and others) support you, your work, and others doing this kind of work? Thinking about ideas like funding, amplifying ideas, using our training and infrastructure... (Michael LeVine, Senior Arctic Fellow, Ocean Conservancy)

Sharon Lavigne: By being vigilant, using livestreams, by speaking out, by using the media and funding RISE St. James

4. What does your group in Louisiana most need from people who don't live there to support the campaign against Formosa plastics and the rest of the chemical plants? (Jane Patton, Senior Campaigner, Center for International Environmental Law [CIEL])

Sharon Lavigne: I need people who do not live here to call Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards and demand an immediate halt to this project.

5. What is the best avenue or strategy for stopping the Formosa plant at this point? Lawsuits? (James Bruggers, Reporter, Inside Climate News)

Sharon Lavigne: Community organization. When the community is organized, we can do anything.

6. Why aren't we seeing the same level of opposition to other proposed petrochem projects as with Formosa in Louisiana? (Lila Holzman, Energy Program Manager, As You Sow)

Sharon Lavigne: Formosa will host 14 different plants inside of their complex. That industry will triple emissions in the 5th district, where I reside, and double emissions in the 4th district.

7. Who are the investors in Formosa? (Vanessa Warheit, Executive Director, Fossil Free California)

Sharon Lavigne: Taiwan.

8. What have been the most impactful advocacy strategies for the St. James community in opposing refineries? i.e. focus on human health, impacts of industry on water and air, racism, etc. (Krista Shennum, Grad Student, Yale School of the Environment & Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente [AIDA])

Sharon Lavigne: Town hall meetings, marches, advocating by going door-to-door, newspaper ads, educating the community

9. Have y'all in St. James used the No Fossil Fuel Money campaign? nofossilfuelmoney.org (Vanessa Warheit, Fossil Free California)

Sharon Lavigne: No.

**Note that questions were submitted by attendees online during the live Q & A session. Written answers were provided post-event by presenters. For further information, please contact IEEFA Strategic Communications Director Vivienne Heston (vheston@ieefa.org).*

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