

That toxic dead zone will move on and on

Re: "Don't grant permit to pollute Gulf" (My View, Dec. 20).

Linda Young writes that the DEP permit would allow Buckeye to create a "three-mile dead zone" around a pipe extending into the Gulf of Mexico. Actually, that's the good news. But the toxic material in that dead zone won't simply stay there.

Suppose the weather is nice for many days, with weak winds, and the discharge from the end of the pipe is not carried away by currents but simply builds up around the end of the pipe. Then the wind begins to blow and, over the next week, blows at typical speeds so that the currents are roughly a quarter knot up to half a knot. The toxic water will be carried, nearly intact, roughly 75 miles - along the coast toward either the Shell Point and St. George Island beaches or toward the St. Pete beaches, depending on the direction of the winds.

The waste water will be stretched out into a long thin ribbon, rather than the original simple blob. If the winds blow it onshore it will not be pretty - unless the original outflow is thoroughly diluted, which seems highly unlikely. This does not sound like a good idea. **WILTON STURGES**
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