COMMUNITY IMPACT BRIEFING

The Louisiana Green Fuels Project

An Independent Review of Economic Benefits, Environmental Risk, and Community Impact in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana

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Prepared for stakeholders evaluating the Strategic Biofuels / Louisiana Green Fuels development at the Port of Columbia

August 2026

Compiled from public regulatory filings, company disclosures, U.S. Census Bureau data, and press reporting current through August 18, 2026.

Abstract

Bottom line: The Louisiana Green Fuels (LGF) project offers Caldwell Parish substantial economic upside — an estimated 75 direct jobs averaging roughly $80,000 per year, several hundred indirect jobs, hundreds of construction jobs, and millions of dollars in long-term tax base growth in one of Louisiana's poorest parishes. However, two protections that would typically accompany a project of this scale in a low-income, rural community are, as of this writing, absent from the public record: there is no confirmed housing mitigation plan for the estimated 1,500-worker construction peak, and there is no binding local-hire mandate — the state's tax incentives require job creation and payroll thresholds, not Caldwell Parish residency. Standard state workforce-training resources (LED FastStart) are presumptively available but not confirmed as engaged, and one company-funded community initiative (Kaleidoscope Café) exists but its scale and connection to plant hiring are undocumented. The project also remains pre-construction: as of August 2026, it has not reached Final Investment Decision, meaning the plant itself has not broken ground and the previously stated 2027 operational target should be treated as outdated. Stakeholders evaluating this project — parish officials, residents, and prospective workers alike — should treat housing capacity and enforceable local-hire commitments as open items warranting direct inquiry before construction begins, not settled features of the deal.

Keywords: *carbon capture and sequestration, bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), sustainable aviation fuel, Caldwell Parish, environmental justice, rural economic development, Port of Columbia.*

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1. Project Overview

Louisiana Green Fuels (LGF) is a development by Strategic Biofuels LLC located at the Port of Columbia in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana. The project pairs a wood-waste-fired power plant with carbon capture and sequestration (CCS), and has shifted its downstream fuel product from renewable diesel to Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). It is described by its developer as one of the most advanced carbon-negative projects in the United States.

Location	Port of Columbia, Caldwell Parish, LA
Site size	171–327 acres (reported variably across filings)
Capital investment	Approximately $700 million to $2.8 billion depending on project phase reported
Power output	100 MW gross / 75 MW net dispatchable, carbon-negative electricity
Feedstock	Approx. 1.3 million tons/year of forestry residue and sawmill waste
CO_2 sequestered	Approximately 1.1–1.4 million metric tons/year via three Class VI injection wells
Fuel output (SAF phase)	Up to approximately 33.7 million gallons/year
Key partners	Sumitomo Corporation of Americas; Carbon Direct; SLB; Koch Project Solutions; IHI Power Services; Hunt, Guillot & Associates (HGA)

2. Project Pros and Cons

Pros

- Job creation: an estimated 75 direct positions averaging roughly $80,000/year, plus approximately 300–380 indirect jobs and up to 450–1,500 construction jobs at peak.
- Revives regional demand for timber byproducts following recent paper mill closures that hurt the local logging industry.
- On-site carbon storage eliminates the need for long-distance CO_2 pipelines, reducing a category of risk (pipeline rupture, third-party land crossings) that has driven opposition to comparable Louisiana projects.
- Has secured a state air permit and a final EPA/state Class VI sequestration well permit — the first Class VI permit issued in Louisiana for a multi-well project.

- A 2022 parish-specific state law bars third-party drilling through the CO_2 storage reservoir, intended to reduce leakage risk.

Cons

- Environmental organizations argue carbon capture and sequestration remains an unproven technology at this scale, with unresolved risk to groundwater and long-term storage integrity.
- Company literature acknowledges direct public pushback, including a town hall where the company felt compelled to issue formal rebuttals to community concerns raised by outside activists.
- CCS economics generally depend on continued policy support and tax credits; the business case could weaken if federal or state incentive structures change.
- A comparable large-scale Louisiana CCS project (Air Products' Lake Maurepas hydrogen and ammonia complex) was cancelled in 2026 following sustained community and environmental opposition — illustrating the category of risk this class of project can face, even though LGF's on-site storage design differs from that project's pipeline-dependent model.

3. Benefits to Caldwell Parish

Caldwell Parish is a small, economically strained community: population approximately 9,256 and declining, median household income approximately $47,000, and a poverty rate near 30 percent — roughly double the national average. Against that backdrop, the project's stated benefits are meaningful in absolute terms:

- Approximately 500 total jobs (direct and indirect) at wages well above the parish median.
- Tax base growth described by the company as being in the millions of dollars, intended to fund schools, roads, bridges, and community infrastructure.
- Nearly $50 million in state and federal infrastructure grants already directed to the Port of Columbia, funding road, dock, and security upgrades.
- Renewed commercial demand for regional timber, benefiting small landowners and logging operations.
- A $250 million allocation of tax-exempt private activity bonds from the state, supporting project financing without direct taxpayer guarantee.

4. Negative Environmental Impacts

- Underground CO_2 injection at scale (over 1 million metric tons/year) carries inherent geological uncertainty; critics cite this as an unproven risk to water supplies and community safety, notwithstanding the developer's site-specific test-well data.

- Continuous large-scale biomass sourcing (1.3 million tons/year of wood waste) represents sustained timber removal from regional managed forests to fuel a 100+ MW facility.
- As a wood-fired combustion facility, the plant will produce combustion byproducts (particulate matter, NOx, CO, and others); the state's determination of no adverse air quality impact was made under a "synthetic minor" classification with enforceable emissions caps, the specific tonnage limits for which are held in the LDEQ permit record and were not accessible through public search for this briefing.
- The broader Louisiana CCS track record includes at least one large, comparable project (Air Products, Lake Maurepas) cancelled after opposition centered on pipeline and habitat risk — a cautionary precedent for the category, even where specific risk factors differ from LGF's design.

5. Impact on Lower-Income Residents

Potential benefits

- Direct plant wages (~$80,000/year) are nearly double the parish median household income — for those hired, this is a substantial income shift.
- Tax base growth could fund public services (schools, roads, emergency services) disproportionately relied upon by lower-income households.
- Timber income stabilization may benefit small, often family-run logging and landowning operations.

Potential risks and unresolved concerns

- Skilled technical and engineering roles may be filled by workers relocating from outside the parish absent a documented workforce pipeline, leaving longtime residents more likely to access lower-wage indirect or service-sector work.
- Environmental burden (emissions, truck traffic, sequestration risk) is borne locally, while the project's fuel and carbon-credit output is sold into national and global markets.
- The project's 80 percent, ten-year property tax abatement under the state's Industrial Tax Exemption Program defers the full public tax benefit for a decade even as any construction- or operations-related burdens begin immediately.
- An influx of up to approximately 1,500 construction workers at peak, into a parish of roughly 9,300 residents where nearly one in five households already reports severe housing problems, creates meaningful risk of rent and housing-cost pressure on existing lower-income residents — a risk that, as detailed in Section 7, does not yet appear to have a published mitigation plan.

Assessment

The project's structure channels its largest direct financial benefits — wages and tax revenue — toward those positioned to compete for skilled roles or who own land and timber assets, while its risks (environmental burden, housing-cost pressure) are diffused across the general population, including residents with the least capacity to absorb or opt out of them. This is not unusual for large industrial development in low-income rural counties, but it is a pattern worth naming rather than assuming away.

6. Individuals and Entities Positioned to Gain

- Strategic Biofuels leadership (CEO Dr. Paul Schubert; COO Bob Meredith) — professional and financial upside as the project advances toward Final Investment Decision and construction.
- Corporate partners with direct financial stakes: Sumitomo Corporation of Americas (anchor investor and 20-year fuel offtake partner) and Carbon Direct (carbon-removal credit purchaser).
- Local elected officials who have publicly testified in support before the state legislature: Mark Black (Caldwell Parish Police Jury President), Baron Glass (Caldwell Parish School Board), and Scott Meredith (Caldwell Parish Assessor).
- Engaged contractors and service providers, including IHI Power Services Corp. (operations and maintenance), SLB (carbon sequestration services), Koch Project Solutions (engineering, procurement, and construction), Hunt, Guillot & Associates (integrated project management), Justiss Oil of Jena (drilling), and Progressive Construction Co. (infrastructure).
- The eventual holders of the roughly 75 direct and 300–380 indirect jobs created, at wages well above the parish median.
- Local timber suppliers, landowners, and the Port of Columbia, which has already received close to $50 million in state and federal infrastructure grants tied to the project.
- Purchasers of the project's $250 million tax-exempt private activity bond allocation.

7. Housing, Hiring, Construction Status, and Workforce Training

This section responds directly to four follow-up questions raised in the course of this review: what, if anything, mitigates construction-driven housing pressure; whether resident hiring is mandated; how far construction has actually progressed; and what workforce training exists to connect local residents to project jobs.

7.1 Housing mitigation

No public housing mitigation plan — temporary workforce housing, a man-camp facility, or a formal housing partnership — has been identified in company or parish disclosures as of this review. This is a notable gap given that peak construction employment (up to approximately 1,500 workers) would exceed 15 percent of the parish's current total population, in a community where housing problems and cost pressure are already elevated.

7.2 Resident hiring mandates

No binding local-hire mandate or Caldwell Parish residency requirement was identified. The project's state incentive package — the Industrial Tax Exemption Program and the Quality Jobs Program — conditions benefits on job-creation and payroll thresholds, not on hiring geography. Company statements describe an intention to "keep opportunity close to home," but this is a stated aspiration rather than an enforceable commitment.

7.3 Construction progress

As of this review, the project has not reached Final Investment Decision (FID), and the core plant has not broken ground. The only physical construction completed to date is port and road infrastructure (notably the Riverton Camp Road upgrade), not the refinery or power plant itself. The project's Final Class VI sequestration well permit — a financing and construction prerequisite — was issued only in mid-2026, after FID and construction-start targets originally set for 2022, then 2025, were both missed. On the information available, construction of the plant itself is effectively at or near zero percent complete.

7.4 Projected start of operations

Company and state projections have shifted several times: an original operational target of 2025 was followed by a 2027 estimate reported in industry press. Given that FID has not yet occurred as of mid-2026 and a construction phase of roughly 30 months is anticipated once it does, a realistic operational start is more plausibly 2028 or later. No updated public target date has been issued by the company since the mid-2026 permitting milestone; any 2027 figure still circulating should be treated as outdated.

7.5 Workforce training programs

- LED FastStart — Louisiana's no-cost, state-run workforce recruitment and training program — is broadly available to qualifying new or expanding employers and is a standard pairing for companies using the Industrial Tax Exemption and Quality Jobs programs, as LGF does. No public confirmation that LGF is specifically enrolled was located.
- Kaleidoscope Café, a community initiative in Columbia that the company has helped fund, is described as a place where skills are built; its scale, curriculum, and connection to plant-specific hiring have not been publicly documented.
- No parish-specific technical college partnership, apprenticeship pipeline, or pre-hire training curriculum tied specifically to LGF was identified.

Bottom line on housing and hiring

Neither a housing mitigation plan nor an enforceable local-hire commitment currently exists in the public record for this project. Both are reasonable, commonly requested asks for a project of this scale in a small, low-income parish, and both remain open items that parish officials, residents, and advocacy groups may want to raise directly with Strategic Biofuels and state economic development officials before construction begins.

8. Questions for Continued Public Inquiry

The following questions are recommended for parish officials, journalists, or community members to raise directly with Strategic Biofuels, the Port of Columbia, and Louisiana Economic Development as the project approaches Final Investment Decision:

- What specific plan, if any, exists to house or otherwise manage an estimated 1,500-worker construction peak without displacing rent-burdened residents?
- Will the company commit to a specific percentage or target for Caldwell Parish resident hiring, in writing, beyond the state's job-creation thresholds?
- What is the current, updated target date for Final Investment Decision and for commercial operations?
- Is Strategic Biofuels formally enrolled in LED FastStart, and if so, what is the training pipeline's timeline and eligibility criteria for parish residents?
- What are the facility's specific, permitted annual emissions limits (NO_x, PM2.5, CO, SO_2, VOCs) under its LDEQ air permit, and how do they compare to other regional facilities?

Sources

This briefing draws on company press releases and project pages (Strategic Biofuels / Louisiana Green Fuels, Business Wire, PR Newswire), Louisiana Economic Development project records, Carbon Direct press materials, Hatch Ltd. project summaries, U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts and Data USA demographic data for Caldwell Parish, trade press (Oil & Gas Journal, Biomass Magazine, Commercial Property Executive, Environment+Energy Leader, The Advocate), and Earthjustice reporting on comparable Louisiana carbon capture projects. Specific permit-level emissions data was not independently retrieved from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's EDMS system or the EPA Class VI docket; readers seeking exact pollutant limits or injection depth/volume specifications should request the underlying permit documents directly from LDEQ and EPA Region 6.

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