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Dear Elizabeth,

One of the most important environmental challenge facing Louisiana is the threat to the Gulf caused by hypoxia, a normally occurring condition in small amounts which is now occurring at unsustainable levels due to man made causes, the overuse of nitrates in agriculture. The Tulane Water Prize is a \$1 million dollar prize designed specifically to incentivize a solution to the problem of nutrient overload feeding the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. The Tulane Water Prize incites innovation by tapping into our competitive and entrepreneurial spirit to bring about radical breakthroughs for the benefit of the public, thereby inspiring the formation of new industries and the revitalization of markets around this seemingly intractable problem. Grand Challenges are socially innovative approaches to addressing problems that natural market forces have failed to solve. The Tulane Water Prize is administered and guided by a team of Tulane University administrators and faculty. In its choice of a major, complex environmental problem as the subject of a Grand Challenge, guided by a university, the Tulane Water Prize represents an innovation in university sustainability.

The Tulane Water Prize invites entrepreneurs to participate in a multi-year competition to discover an innovative solution to the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. The Dead Zone has the potential to damage commercial fisheries in the Gulf by disrupting food webs when the level of dissolved oxygen in the water can no longer support aquatic life. Mississippi River nutrient concentrations and loading to the Gulf have grown over the last 50 years, resulting in increased amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous in the watershed attributed to the use of fertilizers, nitrogen fixation by certain crops, and atmospheric deposition. These nutrients enter the river from difficult to control non-point sources like runoff. Fisheries and the economic markets that depend on them and the upstream agricultural economies and the markets upon which they depend are negatively impacted by this problem. The Tulane Water Prize seeks a scalable, implementable solution that benefits everyone equally, including the upstream agronomic industry.

The Tulane Water Prize launched in January 2014 and will run for multiple years. The \$1 million purse is the ultimate goal for contestants, but a series of sub-prizes will be awarded over the course of the competition, acting as benchmarks for the most promising teams to narrow the field of competitors. A number of satellite prizes will also be available to reward innovative and out-of-the-box ideas that present themselves during the course of the competition. The whole purpose of the prize is not to determine in advance what the solution will be, but to motivate others to act and innovate for the betterment of society as a whole.

Sincerely,

Rick Aubry