State officials completed toxic air pollutant regulations Friday that will require industry and some small businesses to curb releases of 97 toxic chemicals.

Environmental officials say the regulations are aimed at getting Louisiana off the list of the nation's top emitters of toxic air pollutants.

The regulations identify toxic air pollutants as materials that cause "adverse effects in humans, including, but not limited to cancer, mutagenic, teratogenic, reproductive dysfunction or neurotoxic effects."

The proposed regulations also would give the Department of Environmental Quality authority to require companies to install continuous monitoring systems where such systems are "feasible and necessary."

If the regulations are approved by a joint Legislative committee, they will give companies that emit more than certain levels of the 97 chemicals three years to install Maximum Achievable Control Technology.

MACT is a concept introduced this year in federal clean air proposals. In most cases, it would require companies to bring their pollution control standards up to those being met by the top 10 percent of companies with similar processes.
The MACT concept for hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides has been a major point of controversy between DEQ and some 75 industries it ordered to meet that standard this summer in order to reduce ozone pollution in the Baton Rouge area.

The proposed regulations don’t deal with those broad categories, but with specific chemicals that DEQ officials have picked as posing the biggest health dangers in Louisiana.

However, many of the materials that would be regulated do contribute to the formation of ozone, and DEQ officials say a lessening of the area’s ozone problem is expected to be a side effect of the rules.

Although the proposed regulations are being to the State Register for publication, their approval is not a foregone conclusion, since they are expected to meet resistance before the Legislative committees.

How closely the state’s definition of MACT comes to the one eventually adopted by Congress in the Clean Air Act is one of the questions industry is already raising.

Industry is not the only potential opponent of the regulations, since the proposed rules not only include large industry, but cleaners, paint shops and some other small businesses that emit toxic chemicals as well.

DEQ has been meeting with some small businesses the regulations will affect in order to help them prepare.

The regulations will be published in the November State Register and will be the subject of a subsequent public hearing.