In accordance with the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:953.1, and pursuant to the authority of the state entomologist in R.S. 3:1652, notice is hereby given that Department of Agriculture and Forestry is adopting these emergency regulations adding St. Charles Parish to the existing quarantined areas for citrus greening disease (“CG”), also known as Huanglongbing disease of citrus, caused by the bacterial pathogen Candidatus Liberibacter spp and also adding a portion of St. Martin Parish to the existing quarantined areas for Citrus Canker Disease (“CC”) caused by the bacterial pathogens Xanthomonas axonopodis pv. Citri and Xanthomonas axonopodis pv. aurantifolii. The state entomologist has determined that CG and CC has been found in this state and may be prevented, controlled, or eradicated by quarantine in certain parishes.

CG and CC poses an imminent peril to the health and welfare of the Louisiana commercial citrus industry due to their ability to infest rutaceous plants. This industry has a farm value of $2.4 - $5 million in southeastern Louisiana in the form of citrus nursery stock, and $5.1 million in the form of commercial citrus fruit in the state. CG renders the fruit unmarketable and ultimately causes death of infested plants. CC causes premature leaf and fruit drop, twig dieback and tree decline in citrus trees and is spread by wind-driven rain or through the movement of infected plants. Failure to prevent, control, or eradicate these pests threaten to destroy Louisiana’s commercial citrus industry and the growing and harvesting of citrus by citizens of Louisiana for their own private use.

Louisiana’s commercial citrus industry adds $7.5 - $10 million dollars to the state’s agriculture economy each year. Sales of citrus trees and plants by nursery stock dealers to private individuals also are important to the state’s economy. The loss of the state’s commercial citrus industry and privately owned citrus trees and fruit would be devastating to the state’s economy and to its private citizens. The quarantine established by this emergency regulation is necessary to prevent the spread of CG and CC in Louisiana outside of the current areas where these diseases have already been found.

For these reasons, the outbreak CG in Louisiana presents an imminent peril to the health, safety and welfare of Louisiana’s citizens and the state’s commercial and private citrus industry as set forth in R.S. 49:953.1(A)(1)(a). As a result of this imminent peril, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry hereby exercises its full and plenary power pursuant to R.S. 3:1652 to deal with crop and fruit pests and contagious and infectious crop and fruit diseases by imposing the quarantines set out in these emergency regulations.

This rule shall have the force and effect of law upon signature, and will remain in effect 180 days, unless renewed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry or until permanent rules are promulgated in accordance with law.