



## SHARON LAVIGNE

Sharon Lavigne has lived all of her 68 years in St. James Parish, Louisiana. She can tell you about a time when the fig and pecan trees in her neighborhood produced plenty to eat and sell, and when her grandfather caught fish and shrimp in the Mississippi River. The land and the water surrounding it wasn't always poison.

Today, Saint James is part of the 85-mile stretch along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans filled with more than 100 petrochemical plants and refineries. Formerly known as "Cancer Alley" for the prevalence of cancer among its residents, the community now calls it "Death Alley." Sharon too suffers from liver damage and other medical issues, including aluminum exposure.

In early 2018, when Sharon learned that Formosa Plastics Group, a Taiwanese supplier of plastic resins and petrochemicals, had announced that St. James Parish would be the site for a massive project that would create 14 chemical plants, she says she asked God for advice. "Do I need to sell my home? He said no. I said, 'Do I need to sell my land, the land that You gave me?' He said no." "God told me to fight," she continues. "And I've been fighting ever since. I've been going in the fast lane."