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High hopes pinned to water commission

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The newly appointed members of the Louisiana Ground Water Resources Commission met for the first time Monday and were immediately flooded with agenda items. Gov. Bobby Jindal wants the commission to become one of the leading ground water regulatory bodies in the nation. The commission was first formed in 2003, but the Legislature recently made a few changes, notably allowing the commission to strengthen enforcement powers and issue civil penalties for noncompliance. The Department of Natural Resources' office of conservation will serve as the frontline for these changes. DNR Secretary Scott Angelle, the commission's chairman, says the group has the opportunity to fulfill Jindal's vision in a very short time. "I want the commission and its staff to be the epicenter of ground water knowledge, data and policy for the state of Louisiana," Angelle says, adding that the commission's goal will be to "properly balance the needs of people and industry with the need to responsibly maintain our ground water resources."—**Jeremy Alford**