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## Judge Orders Permits, Power For St. Bernard Apartment Complex

### *Fines Promised If Officials Fail To Comply*

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**NEW ORLEANS --** A federal judge has given St. Bernard Parish until 3 p.m. Friday to provide electricity to the site of a mixed income apartment complex that parish officials and some neighbors have fought against.

In a ruling issued on Thursday, U.S. District Judge Ginger Berrigan ordered that permitting of the property happen immediately, and warned failure to comply "without extraordinarily good cause" would lead to fines of $10,000 per day against St. Bernard Parish.

Berrigan noted that parish officials failed to comply with a June 20 ruling from the court that favored the Provident Realty project.

Parish leaders have said they would not authorize power to the properties because the sites did not have valid building permits. They have vigorously denied allegations that their opposition has been racially motivated.

The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center has taken a lead position in legal challenges to advance the construction of the apartment complexes. The advocacy group is listed as the plaintiff party in the most recent court matter.

A special session of the St. Bernard Parish Council was held Thursday night in Chalmette. Following the emergency meeting, parish President Craig Taffaro said he believed Berrigan's orders conflict with Louisiana law.

"Our situation really hasn't changed -- our position hasn't changed," he told WDSU. "The judge has made an order that we find to be inconsistent with what state law requires us to do.

"We're in a pretty precarious situation. Do we violate the law that's been clearly established, that we've been trying to follow all along... (to) follow a federal court order that is contrary to the state law?"