

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

VICTORY FOR POMPTON LAKES PLUME RESIDENTS ON DUPONT TESTING

After residents and environmentalists demand more testing, USEPA and NJDEP agree to expanded chemical sampling

December 6, 2010 – Pompton Lakes, New Jersey – After emotional cries at a public hearing and a strong environmental coalition letter to United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Regional Administrator Judith Enck, the residents of the Pompton Lakes contaminated plume coalition reached another victory. The USEPA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) announced that the residents can have their basement sub-slab tested for all 61 site chemicals, instead of only ten.

After decades of operation at the nearby DuPont Works plant, Pompton Lakes plume residents have been breathing in toxic vapor rising from the groundwater into their basements for years. One of the roadblocks holding up the installation of the vapor mitigation systems on their homes was that the residents wanted complete testing of all chemicals, and they would not move forward until the agencies allowed for testing of all 61.

“The residents stood their ground and I am honored to know them and stand by their side as we move forward in dealing with this toxic tragedy that has changed our lives so dramatically,” said Citizens for a Clean Pompton Lakes (CCPL) Executive Director Lisa Raggiola. “For over two years now, the uphill battle has been intense for our residents in our DuPont contaminated neighborhoods but the residents maintained an amazing strength and will continue up this tough path as we move forward in a positive direction which will hopefully bring back a quality-of-life that we once all enjoyed.”

“We are greatly pleased that the NJDEP and USEPA will be allowing independent contractors to test for all 61 chemicals in answer to the residents’ demands. Congratulations to all the people who worked so hard to make this happen,” said Pompton Lakes Residents for Environmental Integrity (PLREI) Executive Director Regina Sisco. “In the face of great opposition, the residents have won another significant victory. We strongly encourage the residents to keep the faith. We hope this is just the beginning of the solutions to follow.”

The state nonprofit toxics leader, Edison Wetlands Association (EWA) has worked for over a year to help the citizens of Pompton Lakes fight for environmental justice at this controversial site, and they led the environmental coalition’s effort to expand the chemical testing.

“DuPont has devastated and destroyed the town of Pompton Lakes. They should be required to test for all chemicals and their daughter products that have been manufactured over the course of DuPont’s operation,” said EWA Executive Director Robert Spiegel. “It is absurd that the agencies would even entertain the question of decrease in amount of chemicals that are tested for in this blighted neighborhood. DuPont is responsible for this mess and therefore DuPont should pay to clean it up.”

EWA, CCPL, PLREI, and New Jersey Sierra Club sent a letter to Judith Enck on November 11, 2010 requesting that the “USEPA allow residents’ contractors to sample for all 61 chemicals in their sub-slab as part of the residents sampling and vapor intrusion sampling plan. Without this common sense health and safety precaution, the residents will not move forward with the installation.”

With this allowance of testing, the residents can now work with the agencies to have the proper testing done and install mitigation systems on their homes.

“This another important step forward in helping the residents of Pompton Lakes deal with this toxic mess,” stated New Jersey Sierra Club Director Jeff Tittel. “In this case what you do not know will hurt you, and allowing for these tests are important for the health and safety of the people living with this plume. We hope this is a sign that the people of Pompton Lakes will be listened too and the USEPA will require NJDEP to what's best for the people not what's best for DuPont.”

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**** Copies of the letter to Judith Enck available upon request ****

**** Footage of the hearing available upon request ****