



Adding Vapor Intrusion to the USEPA Superfund Hazard Ranking System

By Lisa Riggiola, Executive Director, Citizens For A Clean Pompton Lakes

Thank you for having me here today.

My name is Lisa Riggiola and I have called Pompton Lakes, NJ my home since 1962. I began working with the residents living in contamination in Pompton Lakes, NJ in 2008 when the news of the third pollutant, vapor intrusion contamination was released to the public. It was in June 2008 that I made a promise to my neighbors that I would do all I can to help them. I am the founder of the Citizens For A Clean Pompton Lakes, a volunteer environmental organization which exists primarily to educate, assist and provide information to the residents in our community. Our organization is comprised of giving residents who became involved when the news of this new contamination hit and turned our world upside down. I also previously served our community as a councilwoman. In 2007, I became aware of the truth behind the soil and groundwater contamination that has existed in our community and in my neighborhood for more than two decades. This alarming information was communicated at a special meeting that included DuPont representatives, Mayor and Council. What I heard was not only devastating to me but left me wondering why? It was explained by a DuPont representative that since the findings of soil and groundwater contamination over two decades ago, only 25% of the main site had been cleaned and 40% tested. That night I went home in an anguished state, very worried and thinking why hasn't more been done to safe-guard our residents and clean up this contamination in all these years! I was angry at myself for thinking someone was watching, leading and making sure it was being cleaned up. A few months later the bad news was released to the public that we now had a third concern, vapor intrusion contamination.

DuPont Pompton Lakes Works Site is a historical toxic legacy; a story that began in the early 1900s and continues today in 2011. A munitions factory that closed in 1994 but what left behind soil, groundwater and vapor intrusion contamination. To this day, armed guards still exist on this site. DuPont is a corporate giant that in my opinion does not deserve a "good corporate neighbor award" by its ranking as No. 1 Polluter by Environmental Reporter. The pollution DuPont left behind affects the lives of thousands in our community. To-date, a total of over 450 residential homes in our community are affected and possibly more in the future once the plume is fully delineated. This contamination affects approximately 1/3 of our small 2.97 mile town in Northern NJ. Since the late 1980s we have experienced many broken promises of clean-up of their sites and our neighborhoods, one would only have to look back at the news articles to see what has occurred. It is stated that there is no imminent health risk but meanwhile there are alarming health issues which include 6 women battling cancer on 1/2 of my street and numerous cases of brain tumors and other serious illnesses on other contaminated blocks. There are elevated levels of kidney cancer in women and non-Hodgkin lymphoma in men as reported to us by the ATSDR and the NJDHSS.

The fact that the contaminated Pompton Lakes DuPont sites and our residential areas are still waiting for an HRS almost 25 years later is inexcusable to the residents suffering. Why are we still waiting for a HRS even though our soil and groundwater contamination occurred so long ago? The importance of adding vapor intrusion to the HRS is crucial, not only for the residents of Pompton Lakes, but for many others suffering around the country from this form of contamination."

It just makes sense to protect and safe-guard the citizens of our beloved country. Human life and our environmental well-being must come first....Not greed, development or self-gain. We must remember why our country is the greatest place to live in the world and one of the reasons why is we have been a leader in making positive changes to protect our citizens and our environment. Let's continue the progression by adding vapor intrusion to the Hazard Ranking System to protect us now and all of our future generations to come.

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