

EVERYONE'S BACKYARD

Vol. 20, No. 1 ♦ Spring 2002

OAKLAND COMMUNITY SHUTS DOWN MEDICAL WASTE INCINERATORS



Activism and Patriotism after September 11

Creating Safe Learning Zones

In Memorium: Laura Forman and Tim Sampson

The Journal of the Grassroots Movement for Environmental Justice
Center for Health, Environment and Justice

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ABOUT CHEJ

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that provides organizing and technical assistance to grassroots community organizations nationwide. The center was founded in 1981 by Lois Gibbs, who together with her neighbors won the relocation of more than 900 families from their neighborhood after it was contaminated by chemicals leaking from the Love Canal landfill in Niagara Falls, NY. Hundreds of people living near contaminated sites around the country contacted Lois as her efforts and those of her neighbors captured national attention and proved, for the first time, that toxic waste is not an abstract issue but one that's in everyone's backyard.

The center's mission is to help people build democratic, community-based organizations to address public health and environmental threats. We believe strongly that the best way to solve local problems is from the bottom up, when the people directly affected speak for themselves and have a meaningful role, as equals, in any and all decisions that affect their lives, homes and family. Our focus and resources are devoted to helping local community based organizations form, grow, and become effective in achieving their goals. We do this by providing information, advice, training, and support. We also refer callers to other grassroots groups who are working on the same issues or fighting the same polluter.

CHEJ can help your newly formed group:

- ◆ learn how to conduct successful meetings
- ◆ raise funds
- ◆ define a strategic plan to accomplish goals
- ◆ network with others
- ◆ hold news briefings and press conferences
- ◆ identify experts to assist with technical or scientific issues and questions

For more established groups, CHEJ can provide guidance and assistance on issues such as keeping people involved over the long haul, organizational structure and board development, one- to five-year strategic planning, building working coalitions, developing campaign and issue strategies, media training and assistance, and expanding beyond your existing geographical area.

CHEJ has staff scientists who can answer many of your questions and who can review technical documents and tests results you need help with. The center also has bilingual staff who can respond to requests for information and organizing assistance in Spanish.

Currently, CHEJ is coordinating two national campaigns:

- ◆ *Stop Dioxin Exposure Campaign*, which is working to educate the public about the health threat posed by dioxin and to move all levels of government to take steps to eliminate the sources of dioxin
- ◆ *Child Proofing Our Communities*, devoted to protecting children from pesticides and toxic chemicals in schools and day care facilities

We invite local groups to become part of these campaigns.

The center has a unique library of books, reports, government documents, subject and corporate files, and videos that may have just the information you need. Don't hesitate to contact us.

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READER SURVEY

We see *EBY* as a tool for organizers to use in their local work and in building the grassroots environmental movement. Is *EBY* fulfilling its mission? Are we covering the topics you care about? Are there other things we could be doing to support your organizing efforts?

Last year, in response to what readers were telling us, we made several changes. We expanded Action Line—our reports on community groups—and cut some of the departments that readers seemed to value less. Did we get it right?

We've included a Reader Survey with this issue so that you can let us know what you think of *EBY*. We'd greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to fill it out and return it to us. Your feedback will help us produce a magazine that better addresses your needs.

Thanks!!



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Oakland youth played a big role in shutting down IES's incinerators. Photo of June 28 demonstration courtesy of Greenaction.

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BY BRADLEY ANGEL

IF THE GOVERNMENT WON'T, THE PEOPLE WILL... OAKLAND COMMUNITY SHUTS DOWN IES INCINERATORS

The long community fight to close the Integrated Environmental Systems' (IES) medical waste and solid waste incinerators in Oakland, California has ended in victory! In the face of escalating community protests and direct actions, the IES incinerators shut down on December 10. The victory marks the end of commercial incineration of medical waste in California.

IES moved into the predominantly low-income community of color in the Fruitvale district of East Oakland in the

early 1980s and began incinerating medical and solid waste without thorough environmental review or public hearings. The siting of IES in this neighborhood followed the pattern of dirty industry targeting communities of color and other low-income communities for dangerous facilities that the heads of industry and government would never allow in their own communities.

IES benefited from an extremely cozy relationship with government regulators, particularly the Bay Area Air Quality Management District—an agency notorious for lax enforcement and rubber-stamping permits for polluters. The Air District routinely approved IES's annual operating permit and consistently denied requests for public hearings on the permit renewal.

Despite IES's claims that their incinerators were "state of the art," the routine emissions of dioxin, mercury and other pollutants, the ongoing violations, and government complicity with this polluter provoked the community to organize.

TAKING ACTION

The Coalition for Healthy Communities and Environmental Justice formed in early 1998 to unite Oakland and Alameda residents living near the incinerators with community, health, environmental justice, labor, cancer, religious, and youth groups in this campaign. The coalition called on IES to replace the incinerators with safer non-incineration technologies to protect community health and the jobs of workers. Greenaction, the Center for Environmental Health, Commonweal, and PUEBLO were instrumental in launching the campaign.

The coalition effectively worked within and outside the "system" to win this struggle, but we knew that ultimately the community itself would have to shut down the incinerators. The coalition used all tactics available to pressure IES and its friends in government. We educated and mobilized the community, going door to door with multilingual teams of organizers and multilingual fact sheets and action alerts. We worked with teachers and parents in the many schools located near the incinerators. Teachers became very involved in response to numerous cases of cancer among their ranks. Community organizing meetings were held every two weeks in the evening, hosted by community groups such as the

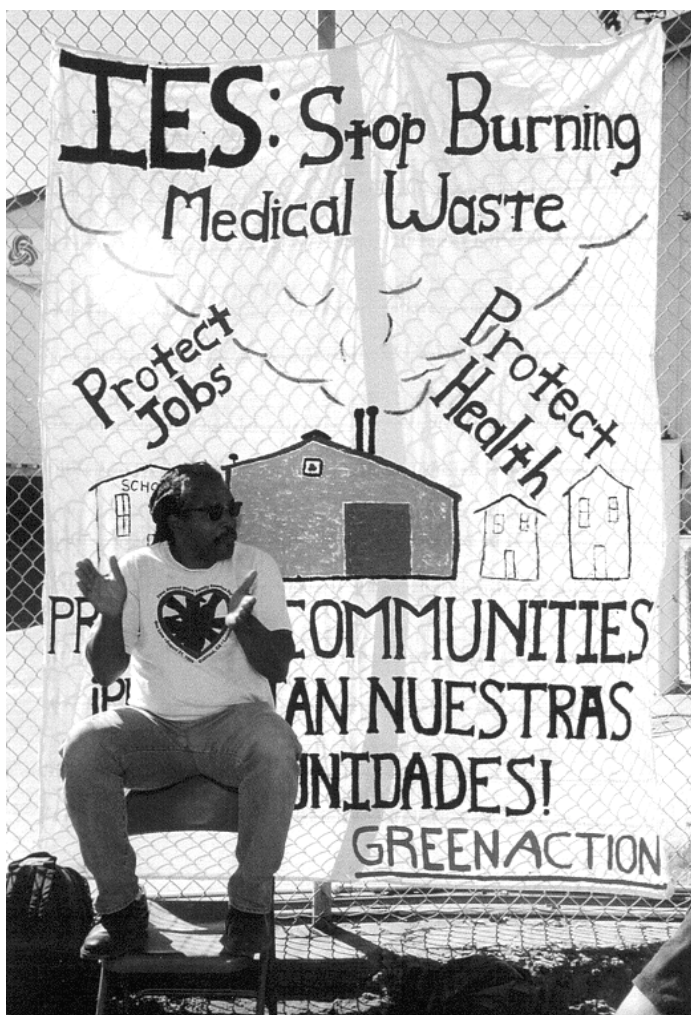


Photo courtesy of Greenaction.

Latina senior citizens in the Las Bougainvilleas housing project near the incinerators, the National Latina Health Organization, Asian and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health, and the Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation.

CHALLENGING THE AIR PERMIT

One very important strategy was to organize to stop the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from approving IES's Title V Clean Air Act permit application. These government agencies—who are supposed to protect public health and the environment—worked hard to approve IES's Title V permit application, even though IES had hundreds of permit violations, including repeated excess emissions and uncontrolled bypasses of their pollution control equipment. Both the Air District and the U.S. EPA were prepared to approve the Title V permit even though the law is clear that a company that cannot assure compliance should not get the permit. It was clear to the community that IES could never assure compliance, but the government tried to evade the law's mandate. When the community coalition demanded that the government must also deny the permit based on violations of environmental justice and civil rights, the Air District even claimed that federal civil rights laws did not apply to their decision-making.

In response to this environmental injustice and racism on the part of the government, the coalition took to the neighborhoods to ask residents to sign written statements (which were prepared in English and Spanish) demanding a denial of IES's permit application, calling for a public hearing, and asking for written notification of opportunities for public comment. We submitted about 6,500 signed statements from the community, and the Air District was forced to hold a public hearing and notify all of these people of the hearing. Hundreds of people attended the hearing and were united in opposition to the incinerators. Compelling factual testimony was submitted to make a strong record if we needed to appeal and challenge any permit approval.

In response to our efforts, in January 2001 Air District staff issued a draft recommendation denying the permit, sending shock waves through their agency and the U.S. EPA. However, Air District and U.S. EPA officials applied pressure to stop the permit from being denied. The community coalition fought back, preventing the permit from being approved. We were at a stalemate. The coalition also vowed to

appeal any permit approval and promised to utilize Title V's citizen enforcement provisions to take legal action if the permit was approved and IES violated it.

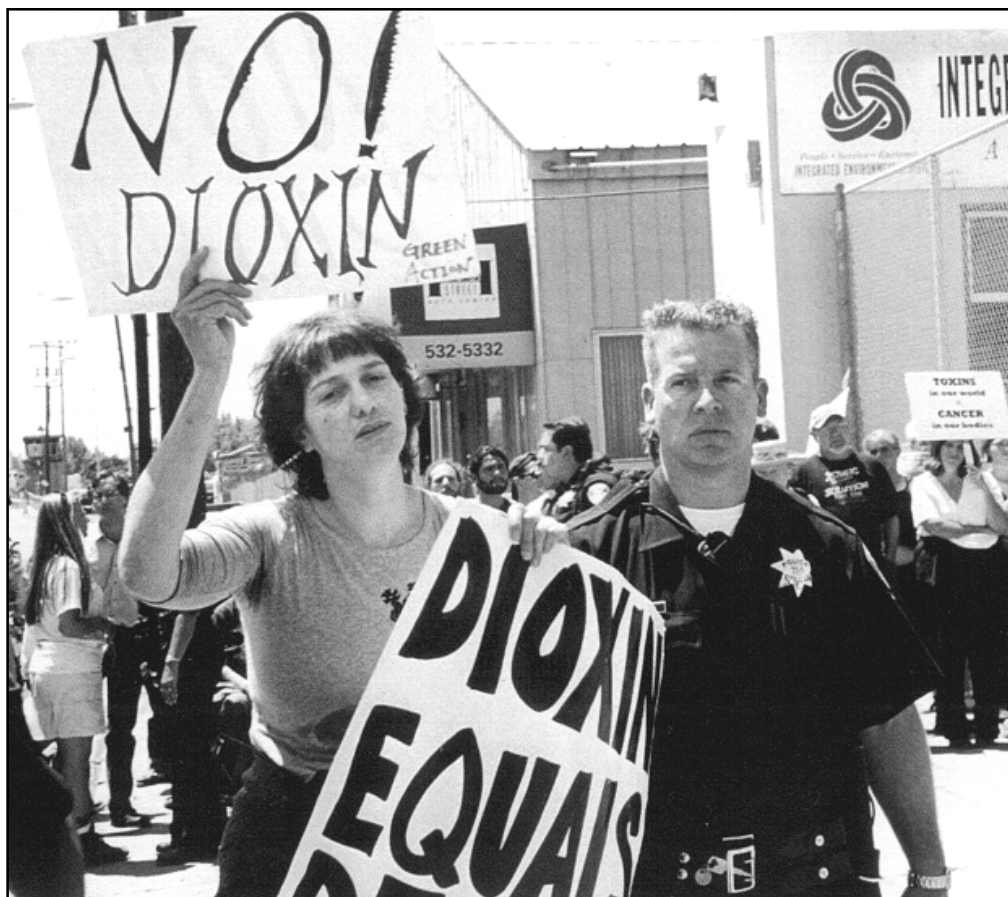
The coalition closely monitored IES's repeated permit violations and objected to the unwillingness of the agencies to fine IES, despite numerous ongoing violations. The Air District consistently delayed action on the notices of violations, but the coalition effectively used the violations to educate the public and the media that IES was not a good neighbor.

WORKING WITH THE HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY

At the same time, the coalition, which included local Health Care Without Harm activists, worked to educate and encourage health care institutions that were IES customers to move away from incineration and to reduce their use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastics and mercury-containing devices. For example, students at Stanford organized a successful campaign to pressure the Stanford Medical Center to implement health care pollution prevention practices and to phase out their use of incineration. This victory was significant as Stanford was one of IES's biggest customers.

AT IES'S FRONT GATE

During the last four years, the protests at IES's front gate grew in size and intensity. Young and old, people of all colors and walks of life came together in larger and larger num-



Protesters block IES's front gate in August. Photo courtesy of Greenaction.

bers to demand an end to incineration. In March of 2001, Catholic school students held a procession and vigil in front of IES. On June 28, about 400 people took part in a spirited protest at IES, vowing to begin direct action if IES would not negotiate in good faith.

Last summer, the coalition entered into negotiations with IES to discuss a reasonable time frame to phase the incinerators out. When negotiations broke down due to IES's refusal to commit to an eventual end to incineration, the coalition responded with nonviolent direct action. On August 7, approximately 75 people converged on IES's front gate, surprising the company and blocking dozens of trucks for most of the day. The police repeatedly dragged and carried people away from the blockade, but moments later the front gate and trucks attempting to enter would be blocked again. Several people were arrested, and the protests attracted widespread media coverage.

One week after the blockade in an attempt to derail further protests, IES got the local Oakland City Council president—who received campaign contributions from the company—to hold a big press conference to announce a “settlement” to partially reduce incineration. Their press con-

ference backfired when it was met with a strong protest from community residents who were infuriated at elected officials siding with an unpopular polluter. The community and coalition vowed to continue the campaign until IES agreed to completely end incineration.

THE COMMUNITY AND COALITION

*WERE PROUD THAT IT WAS THE PEOPLE'S
DETERMINATION THAT WON THIS VICTORY!*

On August 22 the coalition held an around the clock, 24-hour vigil at IES to demonstrate our determination to shut the incinerators. Dozens of people stayed all night, braving the foul odors and toxic emissions from the incinerators, and many more supporters joined in throughout the day and evening. As always, hundreds of people passing by in their cars honked their support of the protest.

A second blockade was held on September 5, with protesters locking themselves to the front gate and sitting in front of waste trucks. Undaunted by this second round of arrests, the coalition promised to keep escalating the pressure. In November, a candlelight vigil turned into an impromptu blockade as IES tried unsuccessfully to move a truck through the peaceful crowd.

THE INCINERATORS CLOSE DOWN!

We had gotten our message across. On December 10, IES closed the incineration facility down and announced that Stericycle, the country's largest medical waste treatment company, had purchased IES's customer list and contracts.

The victory against the IES incinerators shows that you can win against all odds, even against a powerful corporate polluter that is backed by government agencies and officials. One of the favorite chants during our many protests at IES through the years was “If the government won't, the people will, close the incinerators!” At the recent victory celebration in East Oakland, the community and coalition were proud of the fact that it was the people's struggle and determination that won this victory.

But there's still more work to do. The coalition has demanded that IES's parent company and Stericycle hire laid-off IES workers under the same or better union contract. Some workers have been rehired, and we are continuing to pressure the companies on the jobs issue.

According to company officials, Stericycle is now sending waste formerly handled at IES to Stericycle nonincineration autoclave facilities around the state but also to Stericycle medical waste incinerators in Arizona and Utah. The Bay Area coalition is now helping the other communities with incinerators take action. We will oppose this dangerous toxic technology wherever it is used. ■

Bradley Angel is the executive director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice. More information about the IES campaign and victory can be found at www.greenaction.org



Jackie Carrasco, East Oakland community activist, at July protest. Photo courtesy of Greenaction.

BY LARRY YATES

ACTIVISM AND PATRIOTISM AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

While we deeply respect the patriotism of those who have fought and died believing that their sacrifices would protect the freedom of our nation, we hold that there are other forms of patriotism. We must respect the patriotism of those who work to protect the health and safety of our communities from environmental threats, those who fight against economic, social and racial injustice, and those who fight to protect our civil liberties.

— *From a statement by the Military Toxics Project on September 11*

In the new political climate, all dissent runs the risk of being branded unpatriotic. The administration's message—"You're with us or you're with the terrorists"—is aimed not only at foreign states but at domestic opposition as well. In September, even before Bush had declared war on terrorism, two national environmental organizations announced they were suspending their criticisms of the administration's policies to avoid charges that they were unpatriotic.

But for many environmental activists, accusations of being unpatriotic are nothing new. Hundreds of thousands of people across the United States live near contaminated military sites. Every time these communities organize to challenge the military's polluting practices, they risk accusations of being anti-military and unpatriotic. Yet this has not stopped groups from successfully mobilizing their communities. In fact, some groups have even found that veterans are among their most stalwart supporters.

TAKING ON THE NAVY IN SAN DIEGO

The Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) has a lot of experience with taking on the U.S. military—and doing it in a “company town.” A decade ago, more than a sixth of the Navy's ships were based in San Diego. More than a dozen military facilities employed 133,000 uniformed personnel and 30,000 civilians. While some facilities have since closed, the Navy remains a dominant force in San Diego, and the Navy's installations in the area are said to be the largest single military complex in the world. However, the Navy is also San Diego's biggest single polluter.

For the last few years, EHC hasn't just been taking on the Navy—they've been taking on the nuclear Navy. Specifically, EHC, joined by allies from the Military Toxics Project's national network, has been opposing the Navy's plan to station three nuclear carriers—each with two reactors—in San Diego. The Navy's plan provides even less

protection for the public than the civilian nuclear industry is required to do.

Resistance from the Navy itself to EHC has been strong and consistent. The Navy has denied information to EHC and to residents and has made little attempt to negotiate solutions that recognize that hundreds of thousands of San Diego residents might be put at risk by its decisions. Yet, EHC has not backed away from its opposition.

That opposition is broad, including even Navy veterans. In fact, while EHC usually works with lower income residents of San Diego, especially Latino people, EHC has gotten significant support from the Coronado neighborhood—which has the highest concentration of retired admirals in the United States. According to Laura Hunter, director of EHC's Clean Bay Campaign, when faced with the threat of toxic contamination by the Navy, “decorated Vietnam veteran fighter pilots” were among those who packed the City Council chambers of Coronado to demand emergency monitoring of possible Navy radioactive releases.

Nor are the people of Coronado out of step with San Diegans in general. In a poll conducted on these issues by the San Diego State Social Science Research Laboratory in the spring of 2000 for EHC, 506 San Diegans were asked about holding the Navy to the same environmental protection laws as other organizations. Sixty-six percent were in favor; only 13 percent were opposed, giving reasons such as their implicit trust in the Navy and the need to make exceptions for national defense activities. On a related issue, 60 percent of those polled strongly favored requiring the Navy to create an emergency-planning zone around its nuclear vessels. In California, such a zone is a requirement around civilian nuclear facilities. (The polltakers found that even veterans of the armed forces supported this position by a small majority.)

EHC, then, has been organizing for more than twenty years in perhaps the most militarized large city in the United

States and not only has not found this to be a serious barrier but has found considerable support for its positions among veterans. Laura Hunter told *EBY* that EHC certainly has faced accusations of being unpatriotic or anti-military. But the “antidote” that EHC has identified is not to cringe from these accusations but to organize harder and more effectively, focusing on people’s real needs.

SAYING “NO” TO BURNING CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN ANNISTON

Anniston, Alabama, isn’t a major military center like San Diego. But for a small city of around 26,000 people, it has a pretty notable military tradition. Until 1999, when Fort McClellan closed, there were two military bases in the immediate area. The Women’s Army Corps Museum is still located on the McClellan site. Anniston continues to be the home of the Anniston Army Depot, a sixty-year-old facility for army vehicle maintenance and weapons storage. What concerns local residents most is that the Depot contains a large stock of chemical weapons and that the Army has built an incinerator there to destroy them.

Opposition to the incinerator is what brought Rufus Kinney of Families Concerned About Nerve Gas Incineration together with the Chemical Weapons Working Group to testify at a U.S. Senate Defense Appropriations hearing in April 2001. Like many residents of Anniston, Kinney feels that the Army’s plan to incinerate chemical weapons there is much too risky. A military veteran, like many of his neighbors, Kinney does not come to that position lightly. As he told his own Senator Shelby and other senators, he and the other members of his group “support the U.S. Army in its mission to defend our great nation and we have deepest respect for the long, proud tradition our Army represents.” But his support for the Army did not prevent him from telling the senators that, when it came to protecting the people of Anniston from chemical weapons incineration, “the Army has utterly failed to carry out this responsibility.”

Residents of Anniston and surrounding Calhoun County are extremely concerned about the Army’s plans and have made their voices heard. The need for protection from a possible chemical accident is a common theme of letters to the editor in local papers, and it has become a major political issue. The Calhoun County Commission has defied the Army and the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s plans for joint exercises until the county’s emergency responders are given the state-of-the-art gear they need. Senator Shelby, who was given a perfect rating—100 out of a possible 100 points—by the American Conservative Union, has heard the call of the people of Anniston and is pushing the Army to totally revamp its chain of command for chemical weapons destruction and to consider non-incineration technologies. This February, Alabama’s Governor Siegelman announced he plans to take legal action to block incinera-



EHC members and supporters march last summer in support of the Military Environmental Responsibility Act (MERA), which would remove all military exemptions from existing environmental regulations. Photo courtesy of EHC.

tion in Anniston, because “the federal government has failed to provide the maximum protection necessary for the citizens of Calhoun County.” Elected officials only take strong and controversial actions like these when they feel real pressure from activist citizens.

Anniston’s heritage of military involvement may have caused some residents to hesitate to stand up to the Army at first. But once they recognized the real risks of chemical incineration to themselves and to their children, they knew where their priorities lay. In his testimony last year, Rufus Kinney told the Senate Committee, “Anniston, Alabama is a conservative, patriotic community. No community in America has been truer or more faithful to the Army over many decades than has Anniston.” He added sorrowfully, “And this, is how they repay our loyalty.”

WE CAN’T STOP NOW

The government’s attempts to control dissent will work only with our cooperation. While mainstream organizations may recraft their message to adapt to the new political climate, at the grassroots we cannot afford to be intimidated. Our message is that every community has a right to a safe environment and that no one—not even the U.S. military—has the right to jeopardize public health. As the cases of San Diego and Anniston show, even in a strongly pro-military climate, people are able to hear that message loud and clear. ■

CREATING SAFE LEARNING ZONES: INVISIBLE THREATS, VISIBLE ACTIONS

The Child Proofing Our Communities campaign released Creating Safe Learning Zones: Invisible Threats, Visible Actions in January to alert communities to the large number of children who are attending schools on or near contaminated sites and to stimulate further investigation into the problem. Our hope is that soon it will be as unthinkable to send a child to school on a toxic site as it is to send a child to work in a factory. Once again, grassroots action will make the difference.

We reprint here the executive summary of the report. The entire report, including maps, is available at www.childproofing.org/cslzindex.html. Photocopies of the report are available from CHEJ (703-237-2249 or chej@chej.org).

Children are powerless against many dangers in school and out, and they look to adults for protection. However, decisions that adults make on a daily basis frequently imperil our nation's children. New schools are being built on or near chemically-contaminated land or near industrial facilities with toxic emissions that contaminate children's air, water, land, and food supply.

There is growing evidence that these chemical exposures—these invisible threats—diminish the health and intellect of our children. Research has revealed increasing numbers of children afflicted with asthma, cancers, lower IQs, and learning disabilities that impede their ability to develop their full potential. From birth, children are exposed to toxic chemicals in many ways that contribute to this increased incidence of disease. Public schools built on or near contaminated land are one potential source of chemical exposure.

Children are especially vulnerable to exposure to toxic chemicals. During a critical period of their growth and development, children spend a large part of their day at school. To needlessly place them in settings that heighten their risk of disease or hyperactivity or lower IQ is therefore irresponsible, especially in light of recent health statistics that document increased incidence of childhood cancer and disease.

While laws compel children to attend school, there are—astoundingly—no guidelines or laws in place

that compel school districts to locate school buildings on property that will protect the school population from environmental health and safety risks. California is the only state that has some regulations and an assessment process for the building of new schools. Consequently, parents are forced to send their children to some schools that pose a threat to their children's health and abilities to learn.

This report is the outcome of a nationwide effort to eliminate practices that place children at risk from chemicals in their environment—particularly schools, parks, and playgrounds. The Child Proofing Our Communities campaign is the beginning of a long-term collaborative venture among many groups concerned about children's environmental health to eliminate, where possible, chemical exposure in schools and our communities and to provide a safe and healthy environment to learn and play.

Creating Safe Learning Zones is a follow-up to the campaign's first publication, released in March 2001, *Poisoned Schools: Invisible Threats, Visible Actions*. *Poisoned Schools* looked at the problems of public schools that were built on contaminated land years ago, the trend of proposing new schools on contaminated land, and the threat of toxic pesticide use in schools.

Creating Safe Learning Zones was prepared by the School Siting Committee of the Child Proofing Our Communities campaign. The report addresses the need for protective laws around building new schools. In the *Poisoned Schools* report, the campaign identified many schools that were built on or near a toxic or hazardous waste site. We also found that by 2003 school districts across the U.S. propose to build an estimated 2,400 new schools. These findings raised two important questions:

1. How many schools are located on or near hazardous chemical waste sites or other contaminated sites today?

2. Is there a need for national or state-wide legislation that would prohibit building a school on contaminated property or set cleanup guidelines when there is no alternative but to use contaminated property?

There was no state or federal agency that had this information or was willing to research these questions.



Therefore, the Child Proofing Our Communities campaign set out to find the answers.

The campaign selected five states for investigation – California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, and New York. For California, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey, public schools were identified using data from the US Department of Education. For New York, data from the New York State Education Department were used. Private schools are not addressed in this report because of the lack of a central database for these schools.

To locate contaminated sites, the campaign used the list of federal Superfund sites (National Priorities List). For Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York the campaign also used state hazardous waste site lists. The Massachusetts list is based on broader criteria for determining contaminated sites, which accounts for the higher number of contaminated sites identified by the campaign for that state. For the remaining two states, California and New Jersey, only sites on the federal Superfund list have been included.

Superfund sites were chosen because they represent the nation's worst contaminated sites. These are the sites that the EPA has determined pose the greatest long-term risk to public health and the environment. Sites considered for Superfund designation are investigated by the EPA and ranked according to such factors as the toxicity of the substances found there and the likelihood that contaminants have been released into the environment.

The campaign chose to use a half-mile radius as the cut-off in defining whether a school was “on or near” a federal- or state-identified hazardous waste site. This distance was chosen because in most school districts, children living less than a mile from the school generally walk to and from their school every day.

The findings are very alarming. In the five states that we looked at, there are over 1,100 public schools within a half-mile radius of a known contaminated site. Within these states, over six hundred thousand children attend classes in schools near contaminated land. These findings are summarized in Table 1.

For this report, the campaign researched the distance of schools from contaminated sites. We did *not* investigate indi-

vidual schools to evaluate the health risk, if any, to school children and personnel at specific locations. The campaign takes a precautionary approach to protecting children's health. Because children are especially vulnerable to health damage from toxic chemicals, they may be at risk of serious harm when they attend schools built on or near contaminated sites.

*IN THE FIVE STATES WE LOOKED AT,
WE FOUND OVER 1,100 PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND
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This report summarizes the data from only five states. One can only guess at what the numbers would look like for all 50 states. Yet, we are aware of only one state in the entire country—California—that has laws that compel school administrators to investigate potentially contaminated property. Even California's laws, however, do not prevent use of contaminated property. In fact, there are more rules, regulations, zoning, and disclosure requirements today that apply to the acquisition of land to build a private home or commercial building than to building a public school.

If the problems were only limited to those schools built years ago when our knowledge of chemical exposures and human health risks was more limited, new laws would not be necessary. However, school districts continue to propose and build schools on or near contaminated land with little regard to the health and safety of students and school personnel. Five examples of schools recently built on or near contaminated property are described in this report.

Based on the findings of this report, we believe there is a critical need for state laws that ensure that the locations for new schools are safe and that contaminated property is properly cleaned up. For this report, the campaign has developed model school siting legislation to help local activists promote laws and policies (covering both public and private primary and secondary schools) that protect children's health. This model can be given to interested legislators for use in drafting legislation on the state level and to school boards for use in drafting local school policies. This report also outlines action steps that parents can take to ensure that their children are not placed in harm's way—in schools that pose unnecessary health risks.

We truly are at a critical juncture. Public elementary and secondary enrollment is rapidly growing and is expected to reach an all-time high of 44.4 million by the year 2006. At least 2,400 more schools are needed in the next few years to accommodate this increase. If action isn't taken immediately, these new schools will continue to be built without guidelines to protect children against chemical exposures. Failure to act would place tens of thousands of children at risk of being exposed to toxic chemicals at their place of learning. Society can no longer allow innocent children to be placed in harm's way due to inexcusably bad decisions by local school district decision makers. ■

Table 1: Number of Public Schools and Students Attending Classes Within a Half-Mile of a Superfund or State-Identified Contaminated Site

State	Number of Schools	Number of Counties	Estimated Number of Students	Lists Used to Identify Toxic Sites
California	43	11	32,865	Superfund only
Massachusetts	818	13	407,229	Superfund & State
Michigan	64	27	20,999	Superfund & State
New Jersey	36	11	18,200	Superfund only
New York	235	39	142,738	Superfund & State
Total	1,196	101	622,031	

Action Line

ALABAMA

◆ In an important legal victory over the Monsanto Company and its corporate successors, a jury has ruled that the companies must pay damages to 3,500 Anniston residents for dumping PCBs in the town and covering up its practices. Company documents have revealed that Monsanto, which manufactured PCBs in Anniston from 1935 to 1971, continued to dump PCB waste into local landfills and streams even after the company's own research revealed the materials to be toxic. The jury found Monsanto Company, Solutia Inc., and Pharmacia Corporation liable on every count it considered: negligence, wantonness, suppression of the truth, nuisance, trespass and outrage. A finding of "outrage"—which is extremely rare—requires conduct "so outrageous in character and extreme in degree as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency so as to be regarded as atrocious and utterly intolerable in civilized society." Another lawsuit on behalf of 15,000 other residents in the Anniston area has been filed against the companies for poisoning the town.

CALIFORNIA

◆ The **Committee for Safe School Sites** applauds the decision of officials at Pajaro Valley Unified School District in Watsonville to abandon a partially-erected polyvinyl chloride tent on the Aptos High School campus and is calling for a formal inquiry into how such a unit could ever have been considered for public school use. The huge PVC tent (70 feet by 150 feet by 30 feet) was erected in the fall of 2000 to be used for physical education programs. Such tents have never been approved for use on public school campuses by the Division of State Architect; the tent also lacked local fire and earthquake permits. The Aptos/La Selva Beach Fire Marshal locked up the tent over a year ago after school administrators rented 20 space heaters to stick under it to warm the vast interior. In the event of a fire, toxic fumes from the PVC tent would have posed a major health threat to the children and others. Unfortunately, the tent is still there on the

campus, despite the fire department's warning that it is "an invitation to disaster." *Contributed by Committee for Safe School Sites*

COLORADO

◆ In Pueblo, chemical weapons incineration opponents have made tremendous strides in obtaining support for destroying chemical weapons through a neutralization and biological treatment process rather than incineration. The "neut/bio" process controls all by-products and avoids conditions by which dioxins are formed. An exciting coalition of farmers, students, a local labor union, the Catholic Diocese of Pueblo, environmentalists, and Latino organizations has now been joined by county commissioners, state officials, and Colorado Senator Allard in calling for safer, non-incineration disposal. Their support for safer technologies is a drastic shift from years of advocating the incineration program. Sierra Club activist and Pueblo resident Ross Vincent says the strength of the local coalition comes from the willingness of laborers, students, church groups and others to listen and understand each others' viewpoints—to come together on the big issues and know when to agree to disagree. Despite all that momentum, the Army is still considering incineration for Pueblo's chemical weapons and is expected to make the final decision on the Pueblo disposal technology sometime in May. *Contributed by Chemical Working Group*

CONNECTICUT

◆ Milford is home to one of the six dirtiest power plants in Connecticut, known as the Sooty Six. The pollution is so bad that residents nearest the plant regularly have to clean their cars of soot, and one town resident, who lives next door to the plant in a white house, has had the side of her house facing the plant turn black. This same woman recently had a cancerous tumor removed from her thyroid that, according to her doctor, was caused by the "environmental impact" of the nearby power plant.

With the help of **Toxics Action Center**, residents of Milford banded together to take action and formed the **Sooty Six Committee** to push for cleanup of the Milford plant and the rest of the Sooty Six.

On February 4, the Committee testified in favor of a town resolution demanding cleanup of the power plants. Despite heavy lobbying by the opposition, the resolution passed with only a few dissenters. Milford's victory comes just before a statewide spring hearing on two bills to clean up the Sooty Six. *Contributed by Toxics Action Center*

INDIANA

◆ The **Committee for a Cleaner Environment (CCE)** and other groups are opposing a PCB dump—what the government calls a "confined disposal facility"—planned near schools in East Chicago. The groups brought a hundred people to their congressman's town hall meeting, where they sat with lap signs and waited for the end of his speech so they could bombard him with questions about the dumpsite and environmental issues. CCE has also met with the Army Corps of Engineers, who have brought in their fourth person in charge in the last few years. CCE greeted the "new guy" with a Freedom of Information Action request—after he told them at their first meeting that he would summarize a hydraulic dredge test report they had been waiting for rather than give it to them. The group has also joined the NAACP, local clergy, and others in a grassroots effort to keep a local judge in office, since this issue has shaped up as a test of grassroots power and the power of African-American and Latino people in the community. The facility is located near schools whose students are overwhelmingly African-American or Latino.

KENTUCKY

◆ The **Coalition for Health Concern** is trying to get to the bottom of what happened during a chemical accident at the Westlake PVC plant in the huge Calvert City industrial complex at the end of January. The plant released 5,000 pounds of vinyl chloride and 5,000 pounds of chlorine gas, but despite an explosion and massive chemical clouds, the facility sounded no warning, and the Calvert City and Livingston County sirens were also silent. The lack of warning placed several hundred children at nearby Calvert

City Elementary School at risk, as well as residents in Livingston County along the Tennessee River. The Coalition has written to the State Cabinet for Natural Resources, the governor, and regional and national U.S. EPA offices demanding an investigation into the causes of the accident and asking that soil samples be taken to determine the possible health risks posed by the chemical release. The Coalition is especially concerned that plant workers and the public may have been exposed to high levels of dioxin. Residents complained of black soot, foul odors, and trembling noises from the plant for more than a week after the accident.

MARYLAND

◆ **Citizens Against Radium Poisoning**, in the Pasadena area, has been fighting for several years for public water to replace their radium-contaminated wells. Their fight has been slowed down by various ploys by local politicians and the Health Department, such as setting up a stacked advisory group to redirect citizen involvement and telling the citizens that they were in a "no service" area and therefore it was impossible to provide water in their area. However, the group is not giving up and will be focusing its efforts on the County Council, the decision-makers with the power to provide public water. A recent local government announcement that all new wells in the area must be much deeper (and more expensive) to avoid radium contamination lends credibility to their issue.

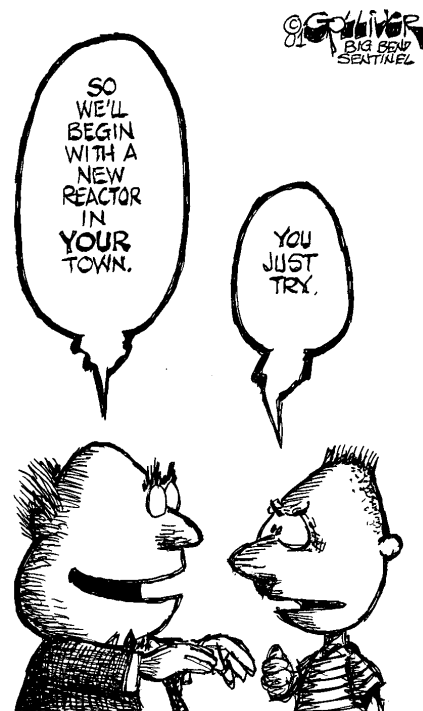
◆ Additional testing at the Worthington Elementary School adjacent to the New Cut Landfill in Howard County found high levels of arsenic, mercury, and other metals in soil. According to a report prepared by a consultant for **Parents For Safe Schools**, metal concentrations found in soil samples consistently exceeded the state's risk-based residential soil standards. Officials argue that contamination levels are within "a range that is typical for central Maryland," but to soothe the fears of parents and neighbors, the county has decided to remove the top two inches of soil and to add four inches of clean topsoil across most of the school property. Parents



For Safe Schools want more soil removed. They are also concerned about how the soil removal will affect the children in the school and are pressing for indoor air and dust testing.

MASSACHUSETTS

◆ After enduring a life-long series of illnesses that baffled doctors, a Weymouth four-year-old was found to have a toxic level of arsenic in his body last year. After the discovery of the boy's arsenic poisoning, four other Weymouth families reported elevated levels of arsenic, but eight months later, local and state authorities have made little progress in discovering the source of the contamination. Taking matters into their own hands, concerned residents have formed **South Weymouth Against Toxics (SWAT)**. **Toxics Action Center (TAC)** is working with SWAT to protect the health of Weymouth residents and investigate sources of pollution that may be poisoning the neighborhood. With TAC's assistance, SWAT has received funding from the **New England Grassroots Environment Fund** to perform initial environmental tests to substantiate their concerns of toxic contaminants in the water supply. Tests conducted by the family of the young boy found extremely high levels of arsenic in a water bed, which had been filled with water from the municipal system in May of 2001. This and other evidence produced



by SWAT has prompted the involvement of the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), which is investigating the source of the problem.

Contributed by Toxics Action Center

◆ Concerned residents in Woburn are taking on New England's Cassella Waste Systems and its abusive dumping practices at the Woburn Landfill. Although the state Department of Environmental Protection ordered the landfill closed in 1986, Casella has taken advantage of a loophole that allows it to add waste to shape the landfill. In the last 15 years, Casella has been able to double the size of the landfill and has been dumping, among other things, toxic coal ash and medical waste into the site. Residents are concerned about the public and environmental health effects of the exposed site's run-off and contaminants leaching into the underlying aquifer and nearby wetlands. Last year, residents formed the **Woburn Neighborhood Association (WNA)** to stop Casella's dumping and ensure the landfill is tested and deemed environmentally safe before it is permanently capped and closed. WNA has conducted three public meetings, each with over a hundred people in attendance. The huge community response, as well as impressive media coverage of WNA, con-

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vinced the state Department of Environmental Protection to agree to investigate the site.

Contributed by Toxics Action Center

MICHIGAN

◆ Four Michigan-based environmental groups, **Environmental Health Watch**, **Lone Tree**, **Ecology Center**, and **Michigan Environmental Council**, have been raising a stink about dioxin contamination in Midland and Saginaw from Dow Chemical. Last May, activists learned that in recent soil samples taken in and around the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Rivers dioxin levels were 80 times higher than state regulations permit. Through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, community groups have discovered that testing done by the state in 1996 and 1998 showed dioxin above state standards in areas that include schools, parks and playgrounds. The state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) had been sitting on this information without doing anything—in large part because of DEQ Director Russell Harding. Again, as the result of FOIA requests, activists have learned that even though his staff was pushing for DEQ to take action, Harding wanted to sit on the information. While DEQ has been reviewing the state cleanup standards, Dow tried to weaken them by hiring industry scientist Dennis Paustenbach, currently vice president of the consulting firm Exponent, to convince DEQ that the risk in Midland is minimal, and Harding, in fact, tried to raise the standard from 90 parts per trillion (ppt) to 150 ppt against his staff's wishes. Despite Harding's public pledge that he won't adjust the standards until after the release of the EPA's dioxin reassessment, rules proposed by DEQ in mid-February would weaken the standard.

◆ **Correction:** In our last issue, Action Line stated that **Families Against Incinerator Risks** of Michigan had succeeded in winning a decision from the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA) to close an existing incinerator and to not move forward with a new incinerator. FAIR did win a decision from the City of Ypsilanti supporting these positions. However, the

YCUA is a joint activity of the City of Ypsilanti and the Township of Ypsilanti, and Township officials continue to support the existing and planned incinerators. FAIR is currently collecting signatures to recall the Township officials who are supporting incineration, anticipating a recall vote in the spring.

◆ A struggle is brewing in Dundee over the actions of Holcim, owner of a cement kiln and the sixth largest polluter in the state. Holcim, whose current compliance with state regulations is dubious, has applied for a permit that would allow it to burn 79 different materials, some of which contain toxic substances or would generate toxic substances when burned. **Michigan Citizens Against Toxic Substances (MCATS)**, with the support of the **Ecology Center**, has called for Holcim to drop the plan and has advanced its own proposal detailing how Holcim could modernize the plant to reduce toxic emissions and conserve energy.

◆ **Parents for Healthy Schools**, who organized to demand a proper cleanup of the new Beard elementary school built on top of an old dump in Detroit, has been buoyed by a series of victories. After months of struggle, the community has gained the right to participate in the contamination evaluation process alongside the school district and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. After a judge denied an injunction to keep the school shut, the community was able to attain an order from the court authorizing the creation of a community advisory council and providing them with the resources to hire an environmental consultant of their choice to finally provide an independent evaluation of the site's contamination. The community has also forced the district to install indoor air quality measuring equipment at the school.

This winter, parents and activists persuaded state representative Belda Garza to introduce the "Healthy Schools Means Healthy Kids Act." This bill is designed to prevent new schools from being built on contaminated property and to ensure that schools built on contaminated sites are monitored. The bill would make annual testing mandatory for schools built on contaminated sites. Parents for Healthy Schools intend to be present and participate in upcoming hearings on the bill to help ensure that the bill passes as written.

MISSOURI

◆ In lead-polluted Herculaneum, community pressure continues to build for permanent relocation of families near the Doe Run lead smelter, the largest in the nation. In mid-January, the U.S. EPA announced a plan to temporarily relocate about 100 families while Doe Run proceeds with a cleanup to remove lead from their homes and yards. Most families, however, rejected the plan as inadequate, and by the end of February, fewer than 20 families had been relocated.

Herculaneum Environment Lead Poison Patrol (HELPP) is conducting a letter-writing campaign directed at EPA Region 7 demanding that the EPA give Herculaneum Superfund status; this would release federal funds for the cleanup and open up the possibility of a federal buyout of residents' homes. The **Missouri Coalition for the Environment** and **Washington University Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic** have supported HELPP's call for permanent relocation with a thorough study of the inadequacy of Doe Run's ongoing cleanup efforts. The rushed cleanup was begun without adequate assessment of the extent of the lead contamination, is using outdated or ineffective cleanup measures, and does not address the extensive lead contamination of schools and streets or property owned by Doe Run itself. Because the lead smelter continues to operate—the blast furnace still has no enclosure—areas are recontaminated as soon as cleanup is completed. According to one HELPP member, "The safety and security of our homes has been taken away from us forever."

MONTANA

◆ Last summer, **Montanans Against Toxic Burning (MATB)**, **Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)**, and the **Sierra Club** appealed the state's decision to allow the Holcim (formerly Holnam) cement plant at Trident to burn fuel composed of up to 50% petroleum coke. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued the permit despite documented irregularities in the test burn and Holcim's failure to provide crucial information during the permit process. A negoti-

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ated settlement reached late last fall will require Holcim to install continuous emissions monitoring equipment, submit regular emission reports to DEQ, and release emissions information to the public. But environmental groups still have their work cut out for them. Holcim has also submitted an application to burn 1,800 tires a day as fuel. A long process lies ahead since Holcim must receive both an air quality and a solid waste permit. At a public meeting in December sponsored by the DEQ, 20 people spoke against the proposal and only 1 in favor. Doctors representing the Bozeman medical community and other residents raised health concerns about increased emissions of dioxin and heavy metals and about contaminating agricultural products produced in the area. MEIC and others argued that the DEQ must do an environmental impact statement—a critical necessity for a plant that is 100-years old.

NEW YORK

◆ **Citizens of Impacted Neighborhoods** (COIN) is a coalition of grassroots groups in western New York state working closely with the **Citizens' Environmental Coalition** (CEC). In one of its first efforts, COIN contacted the state Health Department to talk about community participation in the Department's health studies. The Health Department, which has ignored community concerns, responded quickly when they were contacted by a coalition of groups, and meetings will begin soon.

◆ Members of the **Hickory Woods Homeowners for a Clean Environment** gathered at City Hall at the end of February with a five-foot-high replica of a clock that read, "Time's Up." A year ago the Common Council unanimously supported a bill that called on Mayor Masiello to develop a relocation plan for the residents of Hickory Woods, an area contaminated with lead and toxic chemicals from the LTV Steel Superfund site. The mayor, who had publicly pledged to relocate the families, backed away from his commitment after a state Health Department report concluded that the contamination levels were not high enough to



Hickory Woods Homeowners for a Clean Environment deliver a coffin to mayor who has reneged on commitment to relocate families living on contaminated land. Photo courtesy of Citizens' Environmental Coalition

pose a health risk. At the protest, about 25 protesters delivered a cardboard coffin to the mayor's office as motorists honked their horns in support.

◆ One of **COIN's** members, the **Cheektowaga Citizens Coalition** (CCC) has received a commitment from the NY Department of Environmental Conservation to put in monitoring wells around a notoriously leaking landfill at the end of roads where CCC members live. CCC continues to press for a real cleanup of the site, and they believe the monitoring wells will help their case for it. In addition, CCC is looking forward to working with faculty and students of the State University at Buffalo on several community health testing projects. The university folks are willing to carry out projects chosen and directed by the community, including distribution of air quality monitoring badges and soil sampling. CCC has also won a number of small but important improvements in the area, including repairs of caved-in sewers and blacktop problems from quarry dump trucks.

◆ **Residents Organized** will join residents for **Responsible Government for Lewiston-Porter's Environment** (ROLE)

in mounting a legal campaign against the Porter Town Board's decision to grant approval for the expansion of the town's huge, hazardous waste landfill. A paltry \$200,000 has been offered as annual compensation for the host community that could be the destination for the PCB-laden sediment from the Hudson River dredging. Although incineration would be banned until 2018, the expansion would force the diversion of the town's main waterway and increase traffic hauling the hazardous waste.

◆ **Residents Environmentally Acting for Change** (REACH) continue to fight for cleanup of individual homes contaminated by 3M Corporation and General Electric. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) told one family that had PCB levels as high as 154 parts per million in their yard not to grow vegetables or work in their gardens but that everything would be OK. The state's residential cleanup standard for PCBs in soil is 1 ppm. REACH is hopeful that DEC will order the cleanup of at least six or eight homes this summer, though several

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more also require cleanup. This summer, GE will be cleaning up a stream—heavily polluted with cyanide, polychlorinated biphenyls, and heavy metals—that runs through the residential neighborhood. Last fall, 3M Corporation removed the wastewater treatment plant from its site; the old plant had been a continuing source of contamination for the stream. One hundred truckloads of “blue” soil were removed from the site and 10,000 gallons of contaminated water were pumped from the ground.

NORTH CAROLINA

◆ Faced with strong and growing opposition from **Friends of the Green Swamp** (FOGS) and their allies, the local landfill developers have stepped aside, and Waste Management is now the official applicant to build and operate the dump. Local activists had suspected all along that Waste Management was actually the real dump developer behind the scenes. Meanwhile, the North Carolina Wetlands Unit, one agency currently reviewing the landfill application, received a petition with 1,353 signatures against the landfill, a pile of form letters over an inch thick, and several letters from elected officials, as well as detailed comments from FOGS. As a result, the Wetlands Unit is recommending a public hearing on the issue and has asked the Army Corps of Engineers to put the project on hold until it gets answers from Waste Management to questions such as “how draining of wetlands on the property will be avoided, given the excavation required to construct the landfill.” FOGS also got the Army Corps of Engineers to extend its decision deadline for the proposed landfill to allow for consideration of alternative sites. They mobilized “hundreds, if not thousands” of comment letters to the Corps before the original deadline. In an event covered by both Wilmington TV stations, one FOGS member presented the Army Corps of Engineers with over 500 letters at one time.

OHIO

◆ Last spring, students at Girard Intermediate School, a newly opened school in Trumbull County, began re-

porting numerous health problems. The school was finally closed down for major renovation to correct serious environmental and construction problems—but only after considerable pressure from the **Girard Concerned Parents Group**. According to the parents’ group, the Girard Board of Education kept information from parents that was available even before the school opened and also violated agreements it made with parents to share information with them. The group has requested that the Trumbull County Courts remove all the members of the Board and presented the Courts with a petition signed by over 1,500 local residents. According to the local paper, the *Youngstown Vindicator*, “The Girard Board of Education is learning the hard way that stonewalling parents’ concerns about their children’s health is an expensive—and risky—proposition.”

◆ **Lorain County Neighbors Protecting Our Environment** (LCNPOE) is putting a local polluter, the Nylonge Corporation, on the hot seat, and getting results. In January, Elyria Wastewater Pollution Control Board fined Nylonge \$60,000 (the largest fine the Board has ever imposed), and the Ohio EPA began action against Nylonge because of problems with its risk management plan. The day after the fine was announced, LCNPOE members, including one in a chicken suit, were out picketing a fundraiser by a state legislator who did not respond to letters for action from over a hundred LCNPOE members and supporters. During the fundraiser, the legislator told the press that he hadn’t ignored the letters, saying that he had toured the Nylonge plant with Elyria’s mayor, and that “the city and the EPA would act if something were being done illegally.” A week later, LCNPOE struck again. When the Public Safety Director of Elyria called a meeting and announced an agenda including a slide show by Nylonge, a LCNPOE leader asked whether the meeting would do anything to protect public safety and help shut down Nylonge—“Yes or No?” When they got no answer, the LCNPOE members walked out, determined not to waste their time in another pointless meeting.

OREGON

◆ After a first plan for deeper dredging of the Columbia River was defeated last year, the City of Portland and other pro-

dredging forces have come back with another plan under the name of “river restoration.” But it’s facing stiff opposition again from fishermen, wildlife groups, and estuary communities. Peter Huhtala, executive director of **Columbia Deepening Opposition Group**, which was key to the defeat of the previous proposal, said at a hearing that a river restoration plan was possible, “but it has to start in the estuary with the input and help of local communities.” The current plan, like the one that was defeated, is being pushed by shipping and trading interests, who say that “family-wage jobs, personal income, and state and local taxes” are at stake. Another project proponent said the plan is based on “the absolute best available science.” But crabbers, gill-netters and other fisherfolk say it would dump toxic material in productive marine areas.

PENNSYLVANIA

◆ **Tioga County Concerned Citizens Committee** (TCCC) reports the score is now *Citizens 2, Dumpers 0*. Over 300 people had shown up at a previous hearing where landfill proponents tried to get a zoning change to allow the landfill. The community people stood outside before the hearing holding signs and making the would-be dumpers “run the gauntlet.” At that hearing, the pro-landfill lawyer made procedural blunders. To the cheers of the crowd, officials ruled no action could be taken at the hearing, and it ended early. At the next meeting, the permit was denied. *Citizens 1, Dumpers 0!* Then a judge dismissed the dumpers’ appeal of the denial. *Citizens 2 Dumpers 0!* Meanwhile TCCC members are working to get a new zoning ordinance to block the dumpers from applying again. A member told *EBY* that “It has been nearly a year since we started and they [the dumpers] are no further ahead today than they were then.” TCCC is also working with other PA groups to get better state landfill laws.

◆ Dozens of residents of Laurel Gardens, in Hazleton, received photocopied letters from the U.S. EPA telling them that their homes are “not currently being affected by the gasoline

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spill." The EPA states that with the repair of sewers in the neighborhood, gasoline contamination no longer can reach these residents—even though the agency's own study of mines under Laurel Gardens has not been completed. The one hundred residents who came to the **Group Against Gas** meeting a few days later disagreed with the EPA. In front of TV cameras and with the support of their mayor and other officials, they said their homes were still worthless and their health still at risk, and they pledged to continue fighting and applying pressure until they get a buyout.

PUERTO RICO

◆ The battle group of the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy was scheduled to carry out bombing and other maneuvers on Vieques in late January. In late December, the **Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques** (CRDV) received information that the USS Kennedy had failed a routine inspection and that the captain of the USS Kennedy had been relieved of command because of the problems found. Aware that this was the same battle group involved in the 1999 death of David Sanes, the CRDV issued a press release expressing concern that maneuvers by the battle group would be exceptionally dangerous to Vieques. High ranking Navy and Marine officers urged that the exercises go forward, according to the *Washington Times*, and that live ammunition be used, which the Bush Administration had previously pledged not to use. The governor of Puerto Rico, Sila Calderón, supported the Viequenses and urged that the battle group not come. Four days after the CRDV press release, the Navy informed the press that the Kennedy battle group would conduct exercises off the east coast of the U.S. mainland and would not go to Vieques. Two days after that, the President assured Calderón at a White House meeting that he planned to stick to his commitment to have the Navy fully out of Vieques by May 2003. CRDV activists responded to the announcement by urging Bush to put his promise in writing.

SOUTH CAROLINA

◆ **Citizens Opposed to the Proposed Landfill in Allendale** successfully blocked efforts to expand an existing garbage dump into a construction and demolition landfill. The company had offered to "clean up" the existing landfill, which was shut down several years ago, by excavating the buried waste and placing it in a lined cell in exchange for a permit to bring in more than 400,000 tons of construction waste. Over a hundred opponents of the proposal showed up at a county council meeting and helped convince the county commissioners to reject the plan and to draft a new ordinance to block proposed landfills.

TENNESSEE

◆ **Save Our Cumberland Mountains** (SOCM) has demanded that the state of Tennessee regulate aerial pesticide spraying, which has left a legacy of illness statewide. SOCM's Aerial Spraying Committee and affected citizens (mostly from rural areas) are educating legislators and working to build support for their Tennessee Aerial Spraying Protection Act (TAPSA). TAPSA calls for notification and posting, buffer zones, registration of protected businesses, and county-level pesticide record keeping. In November, SOCM kicked off the campaign with a media event in Nashville featuring residents telling how they have been affected by exposure to chemicals. Speakers included a six-year-old girl who suffers from nerve damage, headaches, and pain in her arms and limbs from a misapplication of Diazinon in her home when she was two.

VERMONT

◆ **United Barre Against Dump** (UBAD) celebrated a total victory as two local developers withdrew their plans for a dump near a school and overlooking a residential neighborhood. In their withdrawal statement, the dump developers complained about the throngs of people that UBAD mobilized in opposition, complaining that "what some people were viewing as democracy was actually mob rule." After negative decisions from the Central Vermont Solid Waste District, the Barre City Council, the Barre City school board and the Barre Town zoning board of adjustment, the developers finally got it—the project was not welcome. A UBAD member told the local press, "This is a great case of

the little guy—the people—winning out over big money." The mayor of Barre said, "I think the people have spoken."

VIRGINIA

◆ **Neighbors Against Sludge** (NAS) is a new grassroots force on the scene in Northumberland County. The largely church-based group has already made its presence felt at the state General Assembly and the County Board of Supervisors. Most NAS members are African-American and low-income residents whose water sources are shallow wells near the proposed sludge sites. The **Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship** (NAPS), which has opposed sludge-spreading in the county for several years, is working closely with the new group. At a Valentine's Day meeting of the County Board of Supervisors, an NAS leader responded to a statement that "sludge is here to stay" by pointing out organized people can change that, adding "not too many years ago, we [African-Americans] could not have even been at this hearing. But we protested, and now we can." Other presenters among NAS and NAPS members and supporters included a nine-year old asthma sufferer and other residents of the proposed sludge area with severe health problems; several ministers; a nurse; local scientists, including an oncologist and a geologist; and a Gulf War veteran whose ship crew got sick from sludge-grown vegetables.

A recent Virginia Supreme Court decision undermined local government power to control sludge, so the Board of Supervisors felt it had no choice but to approve the two sludge permits before it. However, the board put a long list of conditions on sludge spreading, and the immediate reaction of the sludgers was that the conditions would make sludge spreading impossible in Northumberland County. Whatever happens next, however, NAS and NAPS are here to stay and are already working with other communities around Virginia fighting sludge.

◆ The **Blue Ridge Coalition**, fighting a pair of proposed natural gas pipelines, has bombarded the state's Marine Resources Commission with letters. The Commission, which regu-

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lates the pipeline's crossing of certain streams, is considering having a public hearing—probably the first one ever—in the mountainous Southwest Virginia area. The commission also got letters from the U.S. Park Service and from a U.S. congressman, thanks to good organizing by the Coalition. Others are also fighting the proposal. **Trout Unlimited** in Virginia has made blocking the pipelines one of its top three priorities for 2002. And two Virginia legislators are trying to tighten up the state's eminent domain law, after one of the pipeline companies, using a Virginia loophole by setting up a sham Virginia company, was found to be bullying landowners to get access to their land for pipeline surveys.

WASHINGTON

◆ **Preserve Our Islands** has been opposing a gravel mine on Maury Island, a small island in Puget Sound, for several years. Recently, Glacier Northwest, the company seeking to mine, applied for the first of several permits it needs. While mainstream environmental advocates were pessimistic, a grassroots outpouring of more than 300 letters and faxes turned the tide, and the permit was tabled pending further information from Glacier. A number of recent changes in both the

community organization and the local lineup of elected officials have put opponents of the mine in stronger positions. One of the main activist/researchers against the mine has been hired by the new member of the King County Council who represents the island. Mine opponents are also working together with mainland opponents of expansion of the Sea-Tac Airport, since plans for a third runway include using 85,000,000 tons of Maury gravel. Last fall, Glacier mounted a huge media campaign on the island with full-page ads in the local weekly newspaper for several months, but islanders responded with letters to the paper debunking their "straight talk," including the claim that the company was locally-owned when in fact it is owned by a multinational Japanese corporation.

WEST VIRGINIA

◆ In late January, President Bush came to Charleston to tout his Bush-Enron energy policy as vital for national security and jobs. Two dozen representatives of the **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**, **Coal River Mountain Watch**, and **West Virginia Highlands Conservancy** assembled along Bush's motorcade route to strongly disagree. The pro-polluter, anti-people policy—originated in closed-door meetings between Vice-President Cheney and so far unnamed fossil fuel execu-

tives—calls for taxpayers' billions to subsidize "clean coal" and has grave ramifications for West Virginia's still-standing coal-bearing mountains. The signs told the story: *Bush Energy Plan = Mountain Misery! It's Not Patriotic to Destroy Mountains, Communities and Ecosystems! Coal = No Money, No Jobs!* Most likely, Bush didn't see the picketers. Two limos broke out of the motorcade line and veered close to the protestors, keeping Bush's limo on the inside and shielding him from danger: people with a different point of view.

Contributed by OVEC

WISCONSIN

◆ In January, **Stop Unnecessary Road Expansion/Highway J Citizens Group** launched a radio ad campaign against the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) Ackerville Bridge/Lovers Lane Reconstruction Project and the proposed four-lane expansion of Highway J/164. The ads asked local residents to contact the governor and demand that he stop spending "hard-earned tax dollars on unnecessary, fiscally-irresponsible and environmentally-damaging road and bridge projects," especially since Wisconsin faces a budget deficit. A local elected official and lifelong resident of the area was the spokesperson for the radio ads. In addition, the group's soil and water scientist and a group member were given a segment on an "open line" radio show. As the radio ads began, SURE sent out a reminder e-mail to its members. As the ads ran, three area legislators called for WisDOT to perform a complete groundwater study of the Ackerville area and the possible impact of the bridge project. SURE e-mailed its members to contact these legislators and thank and encourage them.

CANADA

◆ Compton Corporation, a U.S.-based pesticide manufacturer, has threatened the Canadian government with a \$100 million claim for damages suffered after Canada banned the use of lindane on canola crops. Highly persistent in the environment, lindane is a known neurotoxicant and endocrine disrupter and suspected carcinogen. In



OVEC's Janet Fount in Charleston with a message for President Bush. Photo courtesy of OVEC.

Action Line

Action Line

Europe, all agricultural uses of lindane have been banned, while in the U.S. lindane cannot be used on canola crops. Compton bases its claim on violations of the NAFTA Chapter 11 rule giving corporations the right to sue NAFTA governments if national laws might hurt their investments. In response, members of the **International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)** have submitted a letter to the Canadian government urging that it safeguard public health and not capitulate to corporate demands. The letter, which has been signed by groups in all NAFTA countries, goes to the source of the problem, calling for a review of Chapter 11 in an attempt to stop business from compromising public safety.

◆ In late 2000, the Timiskaming First Nations (indigenous) people, allied with local farmers and other grassroots people, defeated a proposal to dump Toronto's waste in a local body of water known as the Adams Mine. Now the same community is facing a proposed

PCB incinerator proposal by Bennett Environmental, which would bring PCBs from around Canada and probably the United States to their community. Many of the same groups that blocked the dump have stepped forward again, including local indigenous people. "The First Nations of the Timiskaming region will not allow the building of a massive new PCB incinerator near Kirkland Lake, Ontario," Chief Daniel Chief of Timsikaming First Nation recently told representatives of Bennett. "The First Na-

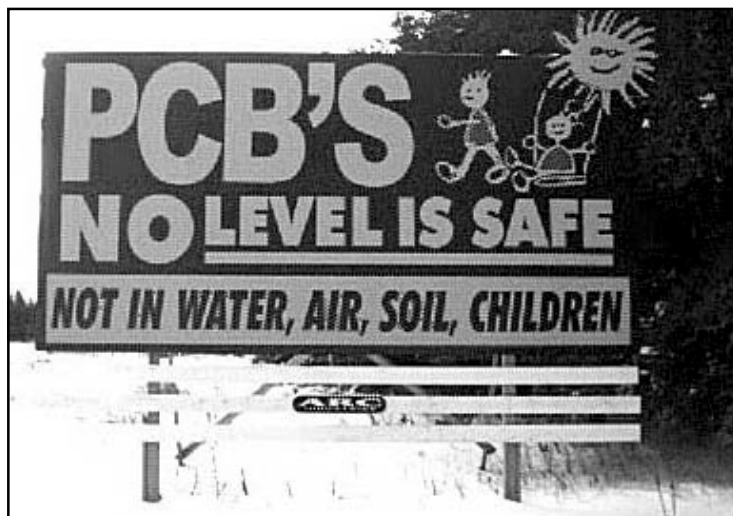


Photo courtesy of Public Concern Temiskaming.

tions of this region will do what is necessary to protect our lands." While the mayor of Kirkland Lake and other local officials support the incinerator for the jobs it would provide, opposition is growing. That opposition got a boost

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BY LOIS GIBBS

TIM SAMPSON: FRIEND, ACTIVIST, MENTOR

I first met Tim Sampson in May of 1981, just after I had moved to the Washington D.C. area, when Tim helped organize a conference with Vietnam veterans concerned about the effects of Agent Orange and dioxin. I was new to the movement and the issues surrounding environmental chemicals and their effects on human health, except as they related to my own backyard—Love Canal.

Tim was a soft-spoken gentle man who embodied the cliché "speak softly, but carry a big stick." Boy, could he get things done.

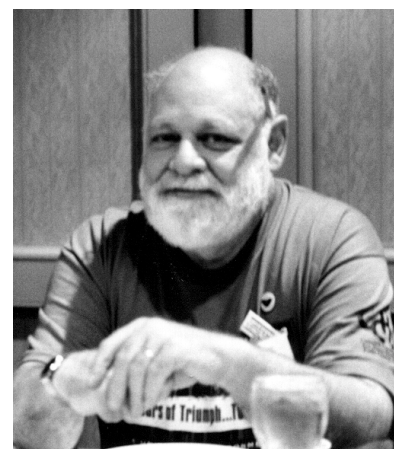
Tim was a pivotal person in helping me move from being a community leader to building a nationwide effort by establishing CHEJ (then Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste). He had decades of experiences with the civil rights, welfare rights, labor, and other social justice movements. He took the time to explain the need to have clear principles to operate from, to stay focused on the leaders on the frontlines, to have faith in people and not be seduced by the glamour and power of the national "Washington" scene. For the past 20 years, CHEJ has operated on the basic principles Tim helped us define.

His wisdom and love, along with his gentle nudging, helped CHEJ through some hard times. When our issue work got stuck, he'd bring new ideas and ways to look at things

and get us unstuck. To most CHEJ members, Tim was invisible, but believe me he was there—through his words, his spirit, and his molding and training of leaders. Tim helped CHEJ succeed.

Many CHEJ members may remember Tim as the Master of Ceremony at our conventions. He led us in songs and poetry and kept us on time. He had a wonderful sense of humor that helped keep my spirits high.

I feel honored and privileged to have worked closely with Tim Sampson for over twenty years. Tim will be missed very much, but his spirit, his teaching, and his love will live on forever in my heart and others that he has touched. ■



On December 24, Tim Sampson died of cancer at home with his family in Oakland, California.

REMEMBERING LAURA

Laura Forman of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition collapsed and died December 10 while leading a demonstration in Huntington, West Virginia to protest mountaintop removal strip mining. She was 39. In this special feature, activists who worked with Laura share their memories of her as organizer, friend, lover of the mountains, and speaker of truth to power.

◆ Laura will be remembered for both her warm, kind nature and her steely determination to end the most abusive, destructive environmental practice of our times: mountaintop removal. She stands as an inspiration for all Kentucky environmentalists: A person who sees something that is wrong and fights like hell to make it right, even at a risk to her own personal safety. We will never forget you, Laura!
— *Dave Cooper, OVEC member who joined after hearing Laura speak*

◆ One thing is certain—because of Laura, West Virginia's people have gained a new energy, a new self-respect, a new sense of defining our own values instead of those values heaped upon us by corporate lords and their political machines.
— *Frank Young, President of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy*

◆ Laura died while she was fiercely defending the mountains and the people she loved. Beneath her stunning beauty, Laura was *fierce*. She was fierce in her fight for the land and the people. She was fierce in her fight to leave a better world for her son Donald. But it was a fierceness rooted in love. I have *never* known anyone with such a capacity for love. I've *never* known anyone who gave love so freely.
— *Dianne Bady, OVEC founder and director*

◆ I am from the coalfields. Six generations of my family have lived on Coal River. As I worked with Laura, I realized she completely understood the oppression the people in the coalfields have been subjected to for over 120 years. Laura nurtured these people, built relationships that would help the people over-

come their intimidation. She taught me that there are many leaders in the hollows and hills of West Virginia; they only need a hand up, a path to walk, in order to find the courage to speak out against the injustices that plague the people. Laura fought for the people, but she wanted them to also fight for themselves. Laura knew that a major victory is accomplished when citizens speak out for the first time or when they write their first letter to the editor. I miss her terribly and we can only continue the work Laura started. For you Laura!
— *Julia Bonds, Community Outreach Coordinator for Coal River Mountain Watch*



Photo by OVEC's Vivian Stockman

◆ I've worked with over 3,000 professionals and volunteers in 21 years of environmental work. Laura Forman had courage, vision, passion, endurance, toughness, tenderness, humor, devotion, and multi-tasking skills rivaling anyone I've had the privilege to know. If I had an environmental activist Hall of Fame, she would be in the inaugural class.
— *Rick Eades, hydrogeologist who*

worked with Laura to support coalfield residents and student activism

◆ Many people called her "my best friend" because that was her way—she made those she loved and supported feel special with words of encouragement and an endless stream of kindness. Yet when confronted, her opponents always received the full force of her anger and indignation over their wrong-doings. She was a complex mixture of fire and earth—firmly rooted in her love for the people, critters, and mountains of West Virginia. I am blessed and grateful to have shared her path.

— *Janet Fout, OVEC Project Coordinator*

◆ At a public hearing [for a strip mining permit], Laura was there to support us and spoke of the DEP's capitulation to the coal industry. At one point when the people in charge did not like what Laura had to say, they tried take the microphone from her. But Laura was not ready to relinquish it. With several DEP individuals attempting to remove the microphone from

her hands, Laura held on tight and continued speaking. She was never intimidated.

— *Joann Hammond, Island Creek Flood Control Project*

◆ Laura Forman was one of those rare people who lived life to the fullest and most often with a smile on her face. In activist movements, such people are so important, for they keep the rest of us going. It was hard to get discouraged when Laura was around. One of my favorite memories of Laura was her appearance in a chicken suit to taunt

a Democratic gubernatorial candidate who refused to debate me during my pro-environmental candidacy for that office. One of my last memories of Laura was of praying for hours during a hearing at the state DEP office. My neck was sore, my back hurt, but I always felt Laura close beside me. I still do.

— *Denise Giardina, Charleston novelist and opponent of mountaintop removal* ■

CHILD PROOFING OUR COMMUNITIES

C A M P A I G N P A G E

Child Proofing Our Communities is a locally-based, nationally connected campaign aimed at protecting children from environmental health hazards in schools and child care settings by raising awareness, empowering community members, and encouraging concerned adults to take action at the local levels. The campaign is currently working on improving indoor air quality; reducing the toxicity of building materials; reducing the use of pesticides; preventing the location of school buildings on or near chemically contaminated areas; and cleaning up schools located on or near contaminated land.

REPORT DOCUMENTS POTENTIAL THREAT TO SCHOOLCHILDREN

On January 22, the campaign released its second report—*Creating Safe Learning Zones: Invisible Threats, Visible Actions*. The report's findings were staggering. In the five states we looked at, we found that over 1,100 public schools housing over 600,000 students were located within one-half mile of a contaminated site. (See the executive summary of the report on page 9.)

The campaign released *Creating Safe Learning Zones* simultaneously in the five states we reported on—California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, and New York—and we made headlines all across the country. The public was as stunned at the shocking results as campaign members were when compiling the information. Within just 72 hours after the report's release, over 4,000 people had visited the Child Proofing Our Communities web page to read the report and CHEJ had received over 80 inquiries from the public about specific sites. Local campaign partners were swamped with calls as well.

The report not only maps the relationship between schools and contaminated land but encourages parents to take steps to find out where the contaminated site is, whether it is close to where children travel to and from school, what types of chemicals are in the site, and whether the area has been cleaned up and secured. The report *does not conclude* that because a school is

within a half mile of a contaminated site the school is a health risk to children.

An important goal of the report was to initiate a conversation at the local, state, and federal levels about the need to pass protective laws that would not allow schools to be built on contaminated land without thorough testing and cleanup to ensure that children are being protected. The immediate results have been heartening. A community



leader in Florida has begun a conversation with a state legislator, who promised to bring the issue to the legislative table in 2003. In Michigan, grassroots leaders have moved state legislators a step closer to holding legislative hearings. Conversations have begun in Massachusetts and other states. At the federal level, several congressional representatives have requested meetings to talk with campaign leaders about possible federal legislation.

The report has captured the attention of the public and brought many new people into the campaign and the effort to protect children from environ-

mental chemical exposures. We hope that everyone who reads this page will visit our web site, read the report, and begin a conversation with their school board and local government about passing a precautionary siting law. Model legislation is included in the back of the report.

The campaign extends a *special thank you* to Siting committee members for all their work on this report—excellent job!

GREEN SCHOOLS

During the summer, the campaign's Healthy Buildings committee will release a pilot report to the public that addresses how to build a "green school." The report will provide parents in communities where schools are being renovated or are being planned with a checklist on how to build an environmentally friendly building. More and more parents are reporting that their children are suffering effects from molds, carpet glues, toxic paint fumes, and other off-gassing materials.

Indoor air in public schools is now recognized as a serious public health problem—but it is one that can be remedied. The report will provide the information parents need to begin to take steps to "clean up" school air so children have a healthy place to play and learn. The final report will be released in the fall.

The "Breath of Fresh Air" project, a new effort by the campaign's Air Quality committee, will launch their new checklist and program as well in the near future. If children in your child's school have such problems as asthma, allergies, and skin rashes, it may be due to the air in the school. This new effort by the Air Quality committee will provide the tools for you to check your child's school for problems and identify ways you may be able to get a local university or college to assist you.

For more information on the Child Proofing Our Communities campaign, please visit our web site at www.childproofing.org, send an email to childproofing@chej.org, or call us at 703-237-2249. ■

STOP DIOXIN EXPOSURE

C A M P A I G N P A G E

The Stop Dioxin Exposure Campaign is a national grassroots effort to eliminate dioxin and initiate a public debate on the role of government in protecting the health of the American people. Dioxin is the highly toxic by-product of industrial processes involving chlorine. The campaign works with hundreds of community organizations to pressure corporations, hospitals and government agencies to modify or shut down dioxin-emitting facilities, such as waste incinerators, paper mills and chemical manufacturing plants.

STALLING THE DIOXIN REASSESSMENT YET AGAIN

THE INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON DIOXIN

Those of you who have been following the work of the Stop Dioxin Exposure campaign know that our work at the national level has focused on pressuring the administration to release the Dioxin Reassessment. Due in large part to the work of the many groups within the campaign, the Reassessment is now in its final stages. The last remaining step is to send the report to the Interagency Working Group on Dioxin (IWG), which is made up of federal agencies that would be affected by regulations stemming from the Reassessment. The IWG will be asked to provide feedback on both the science in the Reassessment and the communications strategy for releasing the document.

In a February meeting with EPA officials, we learned that EPA Administrator Christine Whitman has asked that the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture be more involved in completing and releasing the Reassessment and developing the subsequent policy documents, giving these two agencies the leadership role in the process.

The EPA anticipates giving the IWG 60 days to comment, but if the IWG asks for an extension, the EPA is likely to grant it. The EPA then expects it will take one month to incorporate any rec-

ommended changes. This could alter the release date of the IWG's report beyond the EPA's most recent projection of June 2002. The agency did not share a similar timeline for the communications strategy and release of the Reassessment to the public. At our meeting with EPA officials, we stressed our concern that the IWG's work could become another means for stalling the release of the Reassessment.

At our meeting, the EPA reiterated its commitment to hold at least one public hearing in each of the ten EPA regions. The EPA also promised to provide the campaign with a timeline and communications plan for the completion and release of the Reassessment. This is a step forward—until this meeting we had been unable to obtain that type of information. More importantly, we were able to establish the campaign as an important stakeholder in the public process surrounding the policy.

THE FOOD INDUSTRY AND THE NAS STUDY ON DIOXIN IN FOOD

While the Chlorine Chemistry Council (CCC) and the American Chemical Society (ACS) have played the leading roles in trying to delay the completion and release of the Reassessment, the food industry is now stepping up its efforts by trying to influence the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Not only does the food industry have the ability to influence these agencies through the IWG on Dioxin, but they have another avenue through a new study on dioxin and our food supply currently underway at the National Academy of Sciences.

In the fall of 2000, FDA and the USDA commissioned the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a study on the implications of dioxin in our food supply. It wasn't until the fall of 2001 that the committee was selected and work actually got underway. Most of the committee members are nutrition/food oriented. Several are with nutrition/food trade groups of one kind or another; several others used to be with USDA and FDA. There is no public interest scientist on the committee. Most shockingly, there is no one on the committee with a strong understanding of the toxicology/health effects of dioxin. This is a critical omission since the committee cannot fairly or adequately assess the public health implications of dioxin in the food supply without a fundamental understanding of dioxin's toxicology and its potential adverse effects at levels currently found in our food.

During the committee's first meeting in December, the sponsors (USDA/FDA) were concerned primarily with the impact any attempt to regulate or control dioxin would have on the food industry—not human health. When one committee member asked where evaluating the risk of developing adverse health effects from exposure to dioxin fit into these discussions, he was told by USDA/FDA that they did not care about these concerns and that the committee did not need to quantify this risk or even include it. This raises a flag about the committee's bias. As we saw with the EPA Science Advisory Board dioxin review process, industry can influence the makeup of the committee and the decisions it makes.

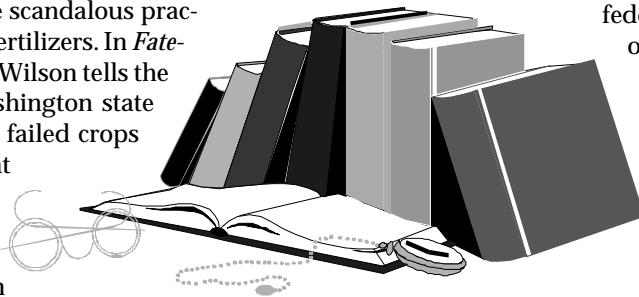
At the second meeting in mid-February, we made it very hard for NAS members to ignore our message. CHEJ staff and other campaign partners testified about the hazards of dioxin and

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RESOURCES

◆ Two recent publications look at the scandalous practice of recycling industrial wastes into fertilizers. In *Fateful Harvest*, investigative reporter Duff Wilson tells the story of a farming community in Washington state where concerned citizens looking into failed crops and farmers' illnesses discovered that their farms have become dumping grounds for industrial waste containing heavy metals, toxic chemicals, dioxins, and even radioactive matter. In following the mayor's efforts to rouse her community, Wilson exposes how inadequate regulation of toxic waste and lack of labeling laws for fertilizers have fostered corporate practices on a national and global scale that threaten human health. This powerful book is based on a series of articles in the *Seattle Times* that put Wilson in contention for a Pulitzer Prize. (HarperCollins, 2001, 322 pp., \$26.00). *Wastelands, The Threat of Toxic Fertilizer*, a report by the California Public Interest Research Group Charitable Trust, documents the dangerously high levels of heavy metals in fertilizers. Researchers found toxic metals, including cadmium, chromium, beryllium and lead, in all 29 fertilizers they tested, and in 20 of these the levels exceeded the EPA's levels of concern. (CALPIRG Charitable Trust, May 2001, 31pp.; phone: 415-206-9338, on-line: <http://pirg.org/toxics/reports/wastelands/index.html>)

◆ In *Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline*, sociologists J. Timmons Roberts and Melissa M. Toffolon-Weiss look closely at the struggles of four poor, minority communities fighting toxic polluters in Louisiana's "Cancer Alley," a central battleground of the movement. The authors place these struggles in the context of southern racism and political exclusion and examine the organizing and legal strategies of the groups, the role played by national environmental organizations and by the



federal government, and the responses of local government and the polluting industries. The authors quote extensively from community members themselves, making this a compelling read. (Cambridge University Press, 2001, 279 pp., \$20.00)

◆ In preparation for United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, set for August in Johannesburg, the Worldwatch Institute has prepared a special edition of its annual State of the World report addressing the salient issues on the summit's agenda. *State of the World 2002* reviews the limited progress that has been made since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and makes the case for a systemic approach to environmental problems that includes transforming technologies of production, developing new business models, and adopting new lifestyle and values. Topics addressed include global climate change, toxic pollution, international tourism, resource extraction and human rights violations, and international environmental governance. (Worldwatch Institute, 2002, 265 pp., \$15.95)

◆ Thermostats, fluorescent lights, automobile switches, computer monitors, and soaps and detergents are a few of the products that still contain mercury. *Menacing Mercury Product Pushers*, a report prepared by the New England members of the Zero Mercury Campaign, looks at five industries that are still fighting efforts to phase out mercury, refutes the claims made by the industries concerning their products, and discusses feasible alternatives that would protect public health. (Mercury Policy Project, January 2002, 18 pp.; phone: 802-223-9000, on-line: www.mercurypolicy.org) ■

ACTION LINE

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recently, when, residents of St. Ambroise, Quebec traveled to Kirkland Lake to warn residents about Bennett. The St. Ambroise residents spoke from experience, since Bennett Environmental already operates a PCB incinerator in their town. They told a Kirkland Lake audience that not only had the facility contaminated their community with dioxins and PCBs, but it provided only low-paying jobs and handled mostly waste trucked from the United States. A St. Ambroise leader told the Kirkland Lake crowd, "We came to save you from having to fight as much as we've had to fight."

Public Concern Temiskaming, a local opponent of the incinerator, has made public the fact that IT Corporation of New Jersey has provided Bennett Environmental with a \$3 million loan to build the PCB incinerator. In exchange, Bennett has promised to burn up to 30,000 tons a year of contaminated soil from the New Jersey corporation. Ontario's Minister of the Environment, on the campaign trail, has recently been responding to criticism of lax

standards with promises to do better. "Toxic waste flows to the jurisdiction with the lowest standards," a spokesperson for Public Concern stated. "While she's campaigning, we're facing a massive influx of U.S. hazardous waste into our region."

ECUADOR

◆ Indigenous groups from South America met in Quito in mid-January to define a common strategy against Plan Colombia and against oil and mining activities in their territories. The participants came from Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Guayana, French Guayana and Venezuela as members of the **Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin** (COICA by its Spanish acronym). The group worked to define a common mission and develop a shared vision for the promotion of real sustainable development and human rights. COICA was created in 1985 in order to "defend the territorial rights, the self determination, and the continuity of the specific cultures of the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin." Presently the organization represents 400 indigenous groups totaling more than 1,500,000 people. ■

WITH SPECIAL THANKS

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice remains an advocate, educator, organizer and leader in the movement for health and environmental justice through the generous support of our members, Partners, Guardians and key foundations and institutions. CHEJ would like to acknowledge the following individuals and institutions who made critically important donations to support our work between December 8, 2001 and March 7, 2002. Our members number in the hundreds, and are therefore too many to name. However, each gift, no matter what the size, is very much appreciated.

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(gifts of \$1,000 or more)

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In Memorium

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COMMUNITY GROUPS

Citizens Opposing San Tan
(AZ)
Concerned Citizens for the
Environment (IL)
Club 3000 Inc. (OH)

INSTITUTIONS

EcoPrint
Egrants
New Hampshire Hospital
Association

STOP DIOXIN EXPOSURE

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about our concern that industry is stalling the release of the Dioxin Reassessment. At the front of the room, we set up a display with cut-outs of people connected by a ribbon on which we attached 31 stories of dioxin contamination collected from 13 states. At the end of our testimony, we presented the NAS committee with the ribbon of stories.

The food industry has already tried to use the NAS study to stall the Dioxin Reassessment. In October 2000, associations representing cattle ranchers and farmers teamed up with the chemical industry to introduce a rider to a senate appropriations bill calling for a freeze on all funds appropri-

ated to the EPA to complete the Dioxin Reassessment until the NAS "completes its review of dioxin-related science under the parameters agreed upon with the Department of Agriculture." Fortunately, the rider was defeated.

The campaign will continue to press the EPA to define the process for the IWG on Dioxin and will monitor and participate in the NAS Committee on Dioxin in our Food Supply. The campaign will also continue to keep our eyes on the food and chemical industries and make public any and all ways we see them inappropriately influencing the process.

For more information on the Stop Dioxin Exposure campaign, please visit our web site at www.chej.org, send an email to dioxin@chej.org, or call us at 703-237-2249, ext. 26. ■

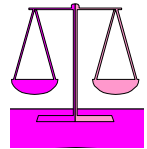


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The Center for Health, Environment & Justice has once again been nominated to receive some of these much-needed funds. If you are a Working Assets customer please vote for CHEJ on the ballots you will receive in October. If you're not a Working Assets customer but would like to find out more about this great program, visit www.workingassets.com to find out how to support CHEJ through credit card and long distance services.



And don't forget to nominate CHEJ for funding in 2003! Working Assets is accepting nominations for next year's candidates through June 30, 2002. Just call or fill out our online form (look under "Get Involved" at www.chej.org) to request a copy of our annual report and our non-profit status and send as a nomination to: Working Assets/Donation Manager; 101 Market Street, Suite 700 San Francisco, CA 94105.

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