

EVERYONE'S BACKYARD

VOL. 30 No.3 FALL 2012

EPA FINALIZES REPORT ON NON-CANCER HEALTH HAZARDS OF DIOXIN



CHEJ'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING ACADEMY



The Journal of the Grassroots Environmental Movement

www.chej.org

Center for Health, Environment & Justice

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Everyone's Backyard is published quarterly by the Center for Health, Environment & Justice, Inc. The Managing Editor is Stephen Lester, with Action Line contributions from Emily Seklecki, and layout design by Gregory Kolen II. EBY is printed on 100% recycled and 100% post-consumer waste paper, not rebleached with chlorine, using low VOC vegetable oil-based inks.



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Library of Congress
#ISSN 0749-3940.
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On the Cover:

CHEJ news conference with US Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) revealing toxic phthalates in children's school supplies.

Photo by Kacey Anisa Stamats

ARE YOU REGISTERED, OR ARE YOU WHINING?

This is an important election year. The campaigning is already at high speed with candidates traveling all across the country. What's at stake? Just about everything I care about. Our regulations around the protection of our environment and public health are sliding backwards. The climate change crisis is becoming more and more apparent - droughts have dried up farm land; forests out west are being destroyed by insects because winters have not been cold enough to control the pest; seawater used to cool a power plant in Connecticut was too warm to be effective causing the plant to shut down one of its reactors.

The wealthy are getting wealthier and the poor are just barely surviving. Money is controlling our country not the people. So this is the time for the people to stand up and voice their opinions. Not only at the polls when it is time to vote but by attending rallies and asking candidates at all levels of government where they stand on the issues you care about. If you can't get into the actual event, there are many other opportunities to get involved.

Hold a sign outside the event that publicly asks the question about where that candidate stands on your issues. Go to Facebook and to the websites of your candidates and write something there - not once but over and over again, until you get a response. Visit the candidate's local office and talk with their staff and try and pin them down on their positions on your issues.

If there is someone who does represent your views and has agreed to take a stand if elected or re-elected, then help them. Volunteer to go door-to-door and talk with people or staff his/her office, hold a house party for him/her. Involvement means just that – you need to get out of your comfort zone and do something for those who are willing to take a stand with you on an issue and challenge those who are not making your concerns their concerns.

Too often people sit back and think there is nothing they can do. But regardless of how much money a candidate has or how many "known" people are publicly supporting them, people have the power of the vote. Everyday people can change the outcome of an election. Get out in the streets and talk with voters. I plan on working for my favorite candidate and I hope you will too. It is empowering and it is about what we already know how to do - organizing. I hope to see some of you in the streets. Let's get those who care about us in places where they can do something.

Lois Marie Gibbs
Executive Director

ABOUT CHEJ

CHEJ is a national non-profit organization that helps people build democratic, community-based organizations to prevent harm from toxic chemical hazards. CHEJ works with the environmental health and justice movement to eliminate harmful toxic exposures in communities impacted by hazardous waste sites, chemical plants, and other polluting industries, as well as, eliminate unsafe chemicals in products used in homes, schools and other facilities. CHEJ mentors and empowers community-based groups to become effective in achieving their goals and build a national environmental health and justice movement where every community is safe to live, work, pray and play without toxic hazards. CHEJ has assisted over 11,000 groups nationwide. To learn more, visit www.chej.org.

By MIKE SCHADE, CHEJ MARKETPLACE COORDINATOR

MAJOR VICTORY THREE DECADES IN THE MAKING



We Did It! After nearly 30 years of fighting the chemical industry, CHEJ and the grassroots environmental health movement secured a historic victory this year when the EPA finalized its report on the noncancer health hazards of dioxin.

What Did They Find?

In this crucial report, which has been delayed since 1988, EPA characterizes the various noncancer health hazards associated with dioxin, which includes developmental and reproductive effects, damage to the immune system, interference with hormones, skin rashes, and liver damage. For the first time, the agency set a safety level or "reference dose" for dioxin, which will be used to develop new dioxin regulations. This is a big deal as EPA's reference dose defines dioxin as toxic at extremely low levels, and any subsequent regulations will therefore reflect this value. For instance, when this new safety level is used to derive goals for cleaning up toxic waste sites, the new cleanup goal for dioxin is 51 parts per trillion (ppt) for residential soil, nearly 200 times lower and more protective than the woefully outdated cleanup goal of 1,000 ppt that it replaces.

How We Did It:

This victory would not have been achieved without relentless campaigning by CHEJ and our partners. Here, we reflect on some of the key strategies and tactics that we pursued, which offer important lessons to consider as we take on new issues.

Leveraging a new President: CHEJ last attempted to get EPA to finalize their dioxin health report at the end of the Clinton Administration. When those efforts proved unsuccessful, largely due to lobbying by industry polluters, we decided to put the campaign on hold during the Bush Administration.

President Obama had declared he was committed to bringing scientific integrity back to decision-making, so we knew we

had a real opportunity to move the EPA. Within weeks of the President's inauguration, we mobilized over 100 environmental health groups to ask President Obama to release EPA's dioxin health report. In the following months, we generated additional letters from hundreds of environmental health groups, environmental justice, dioxin-impacted groups, doctors, nurses and scientists. The pressure worked. In May 2009, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced a detailed "Science Plan" to finalize and release the dioxin health assessment that included a clear plan of action and time frame to complete the report.

Developing a broad coalition: Throughout this effort, we worked to build and engage a diverse coalition of organizations, from Vietnam Veterans to labor, womens, health-affected, local state and national environmental health, and community based environmental justice organizations. We worked with our allies to write to EPA, sign on to our letters, help generate news stories, testify at public meetings, organize online actions, and more.

Engaging in the science review process: We engaged in the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB)¹ review process every step of the way to ensure that the SAB knew the public was paying attention and to counteract chemical industry pressure. We nominated independent health experts to serve on the committee to ensure the panel was made up of real dioxin experts, not industry hacks. We testified at every single public meeting, and got many allied organizations to do the same. At the first meeting, CHEJ delivered a letter signed by over 300 organizations and 2,000 individuals from 49 states. As a result of this engagement, the Science Advisory Board published a thorough and strong report in August 2011 which enabled EPA to move forward.

Engaging the support of federal elected officials: To ensure EPA would do its job, we enlisted the support of federal elected officials. EPA had committed to finalizing the report by December 2010, which they did not meet. We then worked with U.S. Congressman Ed Markey (D-MA) to hold EPA accountable. We worked with our coalition partners and Rep. Markey's staff to engage other members of Congress to help. In April 2011, Rep. Markey and a coalition of 72 members of Congress wrote to EPA urging them to finalize and release the report. This support was critical to our campaign.

Keeping the story in the news: Whenever we could, we kept the issue in the news, in particular in inside-the-beltway trade publications like *Greenwire* and *Inside EPA* that we knew EPA officials were reading. Whenever and whatever we were doing, we let our key reporter contacts know. For example, when we

¹The Science Advisory Board is an expert peer review group that consists of scientists who do not work for EPA.

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BE SAFE Campaign

BE SAFE is a nationwide initiative to build support for the precautionary approach to prevent pollution and environmental destruction before it happens.

CHEJ's 5th Annual Back-to-School Guide to PVC-free School Supplies is Out!

This August, CHEJ released our 5th Annual *Back to School Guide to PVC-free School Supplies*, a listing of safer PVC-free school supplies for children and families. This year we released the guide along with new laboratory testing results that found toxic phthalates in many popular vinyl school supplies, like backpacks and lunchboxes. These harmful chemicals have been banned in toys, and are common in products in schools.

Here are a few quick tips for avoiding some of the most common school supplies made out of the poison plastic.

Art Supplies

- Avoid PVC in smocks by looking for fabric ones. Avoid modeling clays made of PVC (polymer clays such as Fimo and Sculpey).

Backpacks

- Avoid backpacks with shiny plastic designs as they often contain PVC and often contain phthalates.

Lunchboxes

- Use cloth lunch bags. Many plastic lunch boxes are made of or lined with PVC and may contain phthalates or lead. Look for lunchboxes labeled "PVC-free."

Paperclips

- Stick to the plain metal paperclips. Colored paper clips are usually coated with PVC.



Three-Ring Binders

- Use cardboard, fabric-covered, or polypropylene binders. Most 3-ring binders are made of PVC and often contain phthalates. Look for binders labeled "PVC-free."

Learn More and Get Involved!

Visit our website at <http://www.chej.org> to download the full *Back to School Guide to PVC-Free School Supplies*, sign up for our PVC-Free Schools Action Network e-mail list and learn more about how you can create a healthier toxic-free future for your family!

National Safer Chemicals Policy Victory

The U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works passed the Safe Chemicals Act in July sending it to the full Senate for a vote that's expected to happen in September. This is a victory for American families dealing with the many health problems, like childhood cancer, that are linked to exposure to unregulated toxic chemicals. Passage through committee of Senate Bill #847,



sponsored by Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, is the first Senate action to update the broken Toxic Substances Control Act since it was established over 35 years ago. The action follows three years of campaigning by CHEJ and hundreds of groups around the country that are part of the Safer Chemicals Healthy Families Campaign. If signed into law, this Act will establish basic safety testing for all existing and new chemicals. For more information, contact mike@chej.org.

CHEJ's LEADERSHIP TRAINING ACADEMY

CHEJ prides itself in being responsive to community needs. Over the years, we have reinvented ourselves several times as the needs of grassroots communities have changed. In recent years we have repeatedly heard of the need for more training on organizing, organizational development and technical issues. In response, CHEJ is returning to a key element of our roots and reinvigorating the training component of our work.

CHEJ's new Leadership Training Academy will provide groups and activist leaders with introductory and advanced trainings and workshops based on their needs. It will provide one-on-one mentoring for the long haul that will help groups understand what it takes to be successful and to win their local fights. The training will kick off this fall with sessions on protecting children's health and nuclear messaging.

The Academy will build on CHEJ's 30 plus years of leadership training and campaign strategy experience to over 11,000 community, environmental and health groups on a wide range of environmental issues. CHEJ's history of training goes back to the very roots of our organization, to the many Leadership Development Conferences (LDCs) we held in the 1980s and 1990s (see the testimonials from group leaders that have worked with CHEJ in the accompanying boxes).

We really needed guidance for raising money and building our organization. CHEJ's support for our first fundraiser and for making our foundation work more effective was indispensable. They showed us the tools we needed to get it done and made us more comfortable doing it. We wouldn't be where we are today if it weren't for CHEJ.

- Laurie Valeriano, Washington Toxics Coalition, Seattle, WA.

The Need For Training

In addition to what we've heard directly from grassroots organizations and leaders, there is other evidence for the need for the Academy. A recent report by the Environmental Grantmakers Association found a significant 17 percent increase in the "birth rate" of new environmental nonprofit groups compared to 7 percent for all nonprofits. As these new groups emerge, there is diminished training and capacity support to assist them in building strong organizations, networking with other groups and moving them beyond their local issues to regional, state and national campaigns. Additionally, many "helper" organizations have closed their doors.

The lack of grassroots voices in national policy efforts has been an ongoing concern since the climate change policy reform effort did not advance at the national level. CHEJ believes this problem is due to the lack of trainers and movement builders, and the lack of financial support. According to IRS data, the wealthiest 2% of environmental organizations received 71% of



I often tell people that CHEJ was our "midwife." CHEJ facilitated the 1986 workshop that led to the launch of LEAN and then they helped us organize the first of many state leadership conferences that were essential to building the network. Twenty-five years ago, decisions about Louisiana's environment were in the hands of a few government and industry officials. The people now have a seat at the table. We are providing groups with the same support that CHEJ gave to us. Group by group, community by community, the people of Louisiana are getting knowledge and power. - Marylee Orr, Louisiana Environmental Action Network, Baton Rouge, LA.

the total revenue from 2005 to 2009. Meanwhile, new groups with budgets under \$75,000 saw an 11% reduction in revenue. With resources moving away from the grassroots base, many organizations stopped operating. As a result, a top down movement has emerged that can't connect with grassroots groups in a way that will build the base. Furthermore, new groups that emerge are underfunded and not as likely to build strong organizations and often never get to move beyond their local issue. We need to learn from the lessons of the climate change policy reform failure. If we are going to achieve needed federal environmental policy reforms, we need to build our base.

CHEJ's organizing support and technical support was a major reason for our success in getting companies to reduce toxic air emissions. CHEJ was there for us every step of the way. They gave us assistance in developing a smart strategy, access to experts to help with technical knowledge and connected us with other organizations doing similar work. - Erin Heaney, Western NY Clean Air Coalition, Tonawanda, NY.

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ACTION LINE

Action Line is the heart of Everyone's Backyard. This is where we tell the stories of grassroots groups that reflect their creative energy and accomplishments. It is also a way to share strategies, actions and industry trends. Although we do not always mention our role, CHEJ is providing organizing and technical assistance to many of these groups. For other stories, we draw on a large network of contacts and organizations that we have developed during more than 25 years of operation. We welcome and encourage contributions.

Alabama

Residents in the **Birmingham** neighborhood adjacent to the Walter Coke facility met with CHEJ's Lois Gibbs and Teresa Mills to begin addressing the need for a local organization to represent the needs of the community. The neighborhood has been participating for years on the Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) that was setup by EPA. The CAP includes members of the entire community including Walter Coke. CHEJ made the point that the residents need an organization that has only their interests at heart. This group would then identify concerns and issues that they would bring to the CAP for resolution.

California

The **Alliance for the Protection of the Auburn Community Environment (APACE)** is pushing for more soil testing at a Wal-Mart store site in Auburn. The State Department of Toxic Substance Control had called for a soil test for dioxins, but after its completion, issued a "no further action" letter. APACE asked the state for further investigation of the soil at the site, to which the state responded with a request to Wal-Mart to participate in a voluntary cleanup agreement. Wal-Mart refused, because the no further action letter was still in affect and the California Department of Public Health determined additional testing is not necessary. APACE appealed the decision to approve the Environmental Impact Report because it did not fully evaluate the impact of traffic, pollution, and urban decay. APACE continues to fight against the 155,000 square-foot building project

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, Sierra Club, Planning and Conservation League, and other groups and local residents are organizing to stop plans by the Canadian company Plasco Energy to build a plasma arc gasification garbage plant in Gonzales. The groups were buoyed by the decision of the state Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery that the energy generated by the plant would not be considered renewable because of its air emissions. The Governor's office, however, said they would support legislation that would reverse this decision and consider the generated energy to be renewable. This is significant because the state recently set a goal of using 33% renewable energy by 2020. The groups immediately sent letters to the Governor asking him to stand by the recycling department's decision. The air emissions from the

proposed plant would impact a highly productive agricultural community.

Connecticut

Save Stratford and other residents in Stratford remain none too happy about EPA's proposed cleanup plan for the contamination in their community caused by Raymark Industries, a company that manufactured asbestos brake linings and other automotive asbestos products. EPA's cleanup included covering the 33 acre site with a clay cap, and removing waste identified as being from Raymark from 46 residential properties by excavating the contaminated soils and placing it at the Raymark site. According to Save Stratford more than 20 sites in the community still remain contaminated with waste from Raymark. This waste is estimated to be over 100,000 cubic yards and to contain toxic substances such as asbestos, PCBs, TCE and other VOCs and metals such as lead. EPA proposed digging up the waste at these properties and dumping it on Raymark property located in the middle of the community. Needless to say, the residents do not think this is a good idea and are continuing to oppose EPA's decision.

District of Columbia

In May, the **Safer Chemicals, Healthier Families Coalition** hosted a National Stroller Brigade in Washington, DC. The Brigade brought out support from parents, nurses, cancer survivors and others, campaigning for the Safe Chemicals Act. The participants spoke with Congressmen in support of this proposed legislation that would require testing of dangerous chemicals found in household products and foods before they could be sold. CHEJ participated in this event. Similar stroller Brigades occurred in numerous cities around the country in order to lobby local politicians. In Anchorage, Alaska, they held a sled brigade (see photo).



Florida

Save Our Aquifer (SOA) is leading the fight against plans by the city of Rockledge to store reclaimed water in an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) well. The city had put its decision on hold for a year while it considered additional data. Now the year is up and they are moving forward. SOA is concerned that the waste water that will be injected into the ASR well, which could contain endocrine disrupters, carcinogens, bacteria and viruses, will contaminate the clean aquifer that provides drinking water to the city as well as many private wells. The reclaimed water would be cleaned to a primary standard but not a potable or drinking water standard. The problem is the aquifer is not sealed from the ASR well which would allow the reclaimed water to leak into the drinking water supply used by the municipality and private wells. There is also concern that arsenic could leak from the well into the drinking water.

Kentucky

Fifty homes around the Black Leaf Superfund Site in Louisville have been found to contain high levels of contamination in their soil. **Rubbertown Emergency Action** has been working to inform the residents in the neighborhood and to get answers from the EPA on what will be done. The Black Leaf site, which was the location of many pesticide manufacturing plants over the years, will be cleaned up by EPA, but it is not clear if EPA will also clean up the homes surrounding the site. Councilman David James continues to hold meetings with EPA representatives and community members to create dialog and get answers.

Community members in **Louisville**, who have been struggling to bring attention to the leaking Lee's Lane Landfill, have finally attracted the EPA's attention. The site was on the Superfund list, but was removed in the 1980s after a partial cleanup. Since then, there have been reports of leaking toxics to the soil and air, and even buried objects coming up to the surface. There have been problems of ATVs tearing up the soil covering the landfill, and other public uses in the landfill area that could be dangerous for public health. The EPA has agreed to do additional testing of the groundwater and to do methane tests in the fall, but, much to the frustration of local residents, there are no plans for additional cleanup.

Louisiana

In a sudden change of position, the EPA has reversed its plan to strengthen the air quality standards in Mossville, and instead created a new category for the PVC plants polluting this community. The community has been fighting for years to strengthen the air quality standards to levels that exist in other states. In response, **Earthjustice** filed a lawsuit against this shocking decision on behalf of **Mossville Environmental Action Now, Louisiana**

Stroller Brigade to Congress: Toxics chemicals have to go!

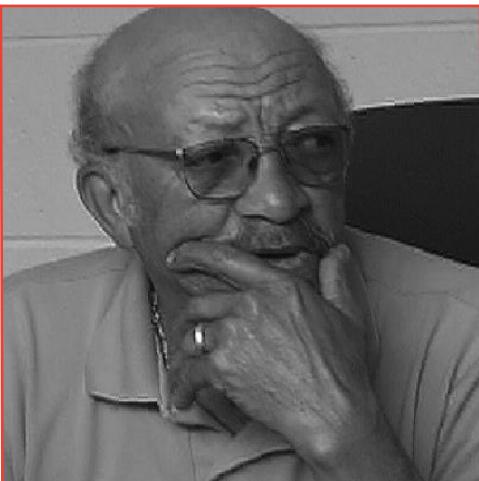
Photo by Safer Chemicals Healthy Families

ACTION LINE

Environmental Action Network, Air Alliance Houston, and Sierra Club. CHEJ also coordinated a national sign-on letter in support of this effort asking EPA to reconsider its decision and issue a new, stronger air toxics rule without delay. The letter, delivered to EPA and its National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), was signed by CHEJ and 60 national and local environmental health and justice groups from around the country.

In Memory of Edgar Mouton

Edgar Mouton, President of Mossville Environmental Action Now (MEAN) and renowned environmental justice advocate, passed away in June of this year.



Mr. Edgar Mouton.

A lifelong resident of Mossville, Louisiana, Edgar Mouton fought passionately and diligently against the PVC plastics and petrochemical industry that had spewed poisonous chemicals like dioxin and vinyl chloride into the air and water of his community. Mr. Mouton was humble yet extremely persistent. He dedicated 30 years of his life to revealing the injustice of favoring the interests of industry over humanity. He worked tirelessly to hold the oil and chemical industries accountable, to get federal Superfund designation, and to reclaim the health of his people. Edgar Mouton will be sorely missed.

Massachusetts

Congratulations to groups throughout the state who opposed the state's decision to give wood-fired power plants green energy credits. As a result of a report published by the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (MCCS), the state has now decided to reverse this decision unless the plants can achieve new efficiency standards. Plants that fail to convert 50% of the energy created into electricity will no longer receive renewable energy credits from the state. Many biomass plants typically only turn about 25% of the energy released

by burning into electricity. The MCCS report found that most biomass plants were no more efficient than coal-burning plants. While the biomass industry cried foul, local residents will reap the benefits of cleaner air.

Maine

About 40 residents cheered when the **Biddeford** City Council voted 8 to 1 to approve a \$6.5 million contract to buy and shut down the Maine Energy Recovery Company municipal garbage incinerator operated by Casella Waste Systems. Two days later, the contract was signed by both parties. For 25 years the public opposed this incinerator which must now cease operating within six months and be demolished within one year except for the main stack that is used to hold cellular antennas. The \$6.5 million will be paid out over 20 years. The city also entered into a new contract with Casella to recycle and manage its waste.

New Jersey

Citizens for a Clean Pompton Lakes have been campaigning for EPA to cleanup contaminated groundwater caused by the DuPont manufacturing plant for years. The contaminated groundwater has spread to the neighboring community and infiltrated basements of nearby homes. After twenty years of inaction, the community decided to ask the state to place the site on the federal Superfund list and delivered over 10,000 names on a petition asking Governor Chris Christie to request that EPA do this. DuPont has resisted making the site a Superfund site in order to control the cleanup efforts which have frustrated local residents.

New York

The **Clean Air Coalition of Western New York** in Tonawanda won a major victory last month. Area residents have been working for years to shut down a crematory located in the midst of their neighborhood. After the company made it clear they would not shut down, the group called on the state's Attorney General to take legal action against the crematory. After only a few weeks, the NY Attorney General announced an agreement with the company to cease operations for six months during which time the company would apply for the required approvals to relocate the crematory to an alternative location. If the necessary approvals could not be obtained, the company will work with the state to modify its operations to eliminate odors, particles, smoke and other emissions that have been the source of persistent community complaints for over 20 years. "Today marks a significant turning point in the fight against the Amigone Crematory," said Rebecca Newberry of the Clean Air Coalition. "The community will find great relief knowing they can enjoy their homes and property once again."

Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water and local residents are cautiously optimistic that the testing being done by the town of East Fishkill will result in a new source of drinking water for residents who live near the Hopewell Precision Superfund site. The town recently purchased land where they will drill a test well to see if there sufficient yield to serve as a long-sought after water source for the community.

North Carolina

CTS Citizens Monitoring Group of Asheville and local residents celebrated when the last of the residents living near the CTS of Asheville plant were hooked up to the city water supply. The electroplating manufacturer had dumped toxic materials on the land for years contaminating the groundwater which most residents rely on for drinking water. EPA allegedly knew of the contamination and covered it up, allowing a 75 home development to be built on the contaminated land. CTS Citizens Monitoring Group has been pushing EPA for years to clean up the site contaminated with known carcinogens such as trichloroethylene (TCE), vinyl chloride and hexavalent chromium. They feel the EPA has repeatedly let them down in not cleaning up the area around the old CTS factory, which has resulted in many cases of adverse health effects. The CTS site was finally named a Superfund site in 2011. Congratulations on this long fought victory!

Ohio

The City of Cincinnati voted unanimously to ban injection wells within the city limits. The ordinance does not mention oil and gas waste because the state has preempted local control on oil and gas facilities. Congratulations to the **Southwest Ohio No Frack Forum** for spearheading this successful effort.

Over 100 citizens showed their support for Madeline ffitch during her arraignment on 5th degree felony charges. Madeline was charged with inducing panic for locking herself to two 55 gallon drums filled with cement at the entrance of a class II waste water injection well in Athens, effectively blocking the entranceway and shutting down the well site. ffitch was demanding that the state test fracking wastewater and keep out-of-state fracking wastewater from coming into Ohio. This protest follows a march several weeks earlier to the statehouse by more than 1,000 people who oppose hydraulic fracturing, toxic wastewater injection wells, and the lack of policies that support a renewable energy future.

Save Our County (SOC) welcomed a report issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) on an accident that occurred last year at the Heritage-WTI hazardous waste incinerator in East Liverpool (see photo next page). The company was

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WTI incinerator fined \$150,000.

Photo from [mnn.com](http://www.mnn.com).

cited for numerous violations following two separate inspections including one deemed “willful” for failing to certify operating procedures for the safe handling of hazardous chemicals. A total of \$150,000 in fines was levied. According to an OSHA press statement, “These violations basically mean that Heritage-WTI failed to create safety procedures and then review those procedures to ensure their effectiveness.” The inspections resulted from an accident in December of 2011 that killed one worker and injured another. SOC has been fighting to shut down the incinerator for more than 20 years and vows to continue until they succeed.

Oregon

Neighbors for Clean Air (NCA) is pushing for stricter air quality regulations in Portland. Oregon has more lenient limits for diesel particulates than its neighboring states, and is also at risk from industrial air pollution. The Department of Environmental Quality has developed a project with the Portland Air Toxics Solution Advisory Committee (PATSAC). There was a public meeting in June in which the committee’s recommendations were presented. NCA hopes to help DEQ decide the right way to put the PATSAC recommendations into action, and tighten up regulations.

Pennsylvania

Two **Springdale** residents filed a class action lawsuit against GenOn Power for their Cheswick power plant. The \$37.5 million lawsuit claims the power plant affects 1,500 households as far as a mile from the site, due to the fly ash, dioxin, lead and other dangerous substances emitted by the plant. The Texas-based company has added technology to reduce emissions but the lawsuit suggests it’s not enough. The negative effects of the plant degrade quality of life and reduce property values for the surrounding residents. The case has moved from state to federal court due to the dollars in question, as well as the defendants being based in another state.

Save Riverdale In Jersey Shore is organizing the residents of Riverdale Mobile Home Village who are being forced out of their homes by the Marcellus shale gas industry. Aqua-PVR bought the village with plans

to turn it into a pumping station to supply water to the many nearby gas wells to be used in the fracking process. The original date of eviction was in May, but it was later shifted to June. The company offered to cover \$2,500 of moving fees for the residents when the actual cost of moving their mobile homes would be \$6,000 to \$11,000. When construction trucks showed up on the day of eviction in June, about 50 activists blocked the gates to prevent entry into the trailer park. The group is asking Aqua-PVR to allow those families who remain to stay, and to fairly compensate the families who felt forced to leave.

Tennessee

Veteran activists and concerned citizens from across the Southeast and as far away as Iowa, Wisconsin and New Hampshire gathered this summer at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga for the Know Nukes Y'all Summit. The meeting provided an opportunity to see old friends, share strategies and tactics, and learn from each other. There was plenty of songs and sharing of stories and experiences. The **Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League's** Environmental Justice and Savannah River Site Campaign Coordinator and Community Organizer, Rev. Charles Utley, spoke passionately about cancer clusters found in the African-American community in Shell Bluff, GA near the Vogtle Nuclear Plant and showed the need for Environmental Justice. More than 15 organizations participated in this crucial invigorating Southern summit.

Texas

Downwinders at Risk from Dallas Fort-Worth along with others created a website called imanarmendariz.com during congressional hearings in support of Al Armendariz, the former EPA Region 6 Administrator. Armendariz had made it his mission to go after violating companies in a southern region containing many of the oil rich states. He was rewarded for his efforts by being attacked by Republican members of Congress connected with oil and gas companies forcing his resignation in order to avoid distracting from the important work of the agency. The imanarmendariz.com website came from a quote by Senator James Inhofe who said, “It’s not just Armendariz. There are lots of other Armendariz’s around.” The website features pictures of supporters holding signs that read “I’m an Armendariz.”

Virginia

Pittsylvania County Supervisors held a special meeting in July to solicit the views and comments of county residents as to whether the state should lift its moratorium and allow uranium mining and milling as proposed by Virginia Uranium, Inc. to take place in the county. Many speakers, including representatives of **Piedmont Residents in Defense of the Environment**, a chapter of the **Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League** (BREDL),

asked the Supervisors to maintain the state’s moratorium on uranium mining. BREDL plans to hold a workshop that will examine topics related to mining and milling uranium in the water-rich environment of Coles Hill section of the county. Uranium mill tailings remain radioactive for up to 100,000 years, and Virginia Uranium, Inc. plans to store its tailings underground at the Coles Hill site.

West Virginia

Coal River Mountain Watch, **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**, and numerous other environmental groups including CHEJ support the Appalachian Communities Health Emergency Act (ACHE) that was introduced this summer in Congress. The historic bill places “a moratorium on mountaintop removal coal mining until health studies are conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services.” In the past few years, more than 20 peer-reviewed studies have identified links between mountaintop removal mining and adverse health effects including birth defects, cancer, chronic heart, lung, kidney disease and more. This bill would stop mountaintop removal coal mining until the science clearly demonstrates that these mines will not cost the communities where they are located their health or their lives. It would also fund some of the basic research needed to address this issue.

Wisconsin

The **Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger** is concerned that the US Army has changed the rules for membership of the Restoration Advisory Board at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant. The board was made up of local representatives, some of whom have served for all 20 years of its existence. Now, these members will have to reapply and be approved by the Army to serve on the board again. The new board will prepare comments on the closure methods for the groundwater cleanup occurring in nearby neighborhoods, as well as oversee the installation of a public water system.

Canada

The city council of **Powell River** located outside of the city of Vancouver voted against a garbage incinerator proposed by Wheelabrator Technologies Inc. The facility would have been placed on property owned by a paper mill which is protected under Section 21 in the city’s charter. It says that no law or by-law of the council can restrict commercial activity or air, water, or ground pollution on the mill site. Opposition to the project was led by a local scientist who educated the community and the council members on the negative effects the trash-to-energy facility would bring. Although this decision marks a victory for the community, they are still fighting to remove Section 21 from the charter. ♦



Children's Environmental Health Program

Rhode Island Passes Safe School Siting Law!

On June 6th, Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee signed into law school siting legislation, arguably the strongest law in the nation when it comes to addressing the problem of building schools on contaminated sites. CHEJ congratulates Attorney Steve Fischbach and the many RI environmental justice groups that have been fighting for this law for over a decade.

CHEJ and a network of groups have been working on this issue for many years, and succeeded in pushing the Environmental Protection Agency to develop national School Siting Guidelines that were released in 2011. Rhode Island is the first state to pass a law that reflects EPA's new protective guidelines.

The Rhode Island law bans the construction of schools on any property contaminated with hazardous materials, petroleum, or toxic gases. It does allow for schools on such properties, but only if a public process is established to first investigate alternative sites.



The new law can be downloaded at: <http://tinyurl.com/RIsiting>

Then, if it is determined that the contaminated site should still be considered, construction would only proceed after a comprehensive cleanup is done in accordance with state regulations.

CHEJ's Childrens' Environmental Health Workshops



CHEJ is holding regional workshops on priority children's environmental health issues to educate people about school hazards that pose a risk to children and to assist people in identifying solutions. The following workshops are being offered by CHEJ.

PCBs in Schools – Learn about a hazard in schools built before 1979: PCB oil in old lighting fixtures that after 30 plus years often leak or off-gas into school classrooms. Learn what you can do to "green your school" by replacing the old toxic lights with energy efficient lighting. For fact sheets and additional resources, see <http://chej.org/campaigns/cehp/projects/pbcs-in-schools/>.

School Siting – Learn about policies and practices that ensure new schools are located on sites that are clean and safe. New state and national policies are finally ensuring that proposed school sites are fully investigated for possible toxic contamination from past dumping, nearby toxic sites or major sources of air pollution, and safe cleanups are done if needed, before the school is built. For fact sheets and additional resources, see <http://chej.org/campaigns/cehp/projects/school-siting/>.

Contact CHEJ at 703-237-2249 or anne@chej.org if you are interested in a workshop in your state.

Training Workshops

CHEJ's training workshops will help groups and leaders build skills, provide the opportunity to exchange ideas and information, and bring people together so that they can learn from each other. It will build and strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of community, regional, statewide, national groups and activist leaders. CHEJ will offer many workshops covering a wide range of issues and topics including those listed below.

Introductory & Advanced Organizing Skills

- Basics of Organizing
- Developing a Campaign Strategy
- Advocacy Tactics & Plans
- Mobilizing Your Membership
- Creating & Building Coalitions

Education and Publicity

- Messaging & Framing
- Media Events & Outreach
- Social Media & On-Line Organizing
- Publicity Campaigns
- Media & Educational Events

Organizational Development

- Organizational & Board Development
- Member, Donor & Events Fundraising
- Creating Budgets & Fundraising Plans
- Youth Leadership Development
- Diversity Leadership Development
- Strategic Planning

CHEJ will also provide training on key environmental health issues such as building a green economy, promoting safe and clean energy (for groups working on fracking, for example) purchasing safe products and moving towards chemical policy reform. These strategy sessions will bolster campaign strategy planning and build coalitions on a range of environmental issues.

We learned CHEJ's lessons on effective organizing the hard way. In fighting the proposed incinerator, we had the best science available ... But, we couldn't get our foot in the door, even with expensive lawyers. However, we eventually won our battle after 5 years ... because of grassroots organizing that pressured the local politicians. CHEJ's message was to build coalitions of citizens and groups and put pressure on the decision makers. Effecting change is like driving a nail through wood. The expert can sharpen the nail but you need the weight of public opinion to drive the nail home! - Paul Connett, Waste Not, Canton, NY.



CHEJ's renewed emphasis on training will grow the environmental health and justice movement by strengthening groups' infrastructure, capacity and effectiveness. Let us know what you think about CHEJ moving in this direction. Are you interesting in having CHEJ provide training for your group? For more information, please contact CHEJ at 703-237-2249 or slester@chej.org. ♦

Winning Justice Step-by-Step



Order your "Winning Justice Step-by-Step" T-shirt today!

Visit www.chej.org/winningjustice

With Special Thanks

CHEJ would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations that made critically important donations to support our work from May 1, 2012 to July 31, 2012. We wish we had the space to acknowledge each and every one of CHEJ's donors in these pages because all gifts, regardless of size, are very much appreciated. Thank you for your support!

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ORGANIZATIONAL & COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

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MAJOR VICTORY THREE DECADES IN THE MAKING, continued from page 3

learned EPA published a new report that found dioxin emissions increased for the first time in years, we immediately hit the press. That led to a number of articles in key outlets, including the *Washington Post*, which helped keep the pressure on the agency.

Holding the EPA and Obama Administration accountable for their promises: When EPA announced their Science Plan for finalizing the dioxin health assessment, the agency had committed to a fairly stringent timeframe for completing their report. We leveraged those schedules and commitments to hold the EPA and Obama administration accountable. If they missed self-imposed deadlines, which they did a number of times, we cried foul. We made sure both leading staff at EPA and the White House knew we were paying attention.

Online/social media activism: Online organizing was another important element. By working the internet, we got organizations and individuals to sign our letters and petitions and take action. Two back-to-back online actions were particularly powerful. At the end of January 2012 EPA missed another critical deadline. We sent out e-blasts to our activist network and campaign partners urging them to help put a face on the problem by taking photos of themselves holding up a sign that read, "EPA's Dioxin Health Report: Denied" (see photo). We then shared the photos with our supporters, and urged people to e-mail their photos directly to EPA. A few days later we asked our network to bombard Lisa Jackson's Facebook wall with messages about how they felt about being denied EPA's dioxin health report. Within hours, hundreds of people had posted on Lisa Jackson's page. There was no mistake – EPA knew the public was outraged and the agency could not ignore us.

Creating the political space for EPA to act: EPA was under tremendous pressure by a coalition of chemical and big



agricultural industries not to act on dioxin. By generating significant political pressure on EPA in the final months and especially weeks and days of the campaign when we knew EPA was considering what to do, our campaign created the political pressure and space by which EPA could do what was right for environmental and public health. The result? We won! The EPA released the report this past February!

What's next?

This victory was huge and historic, but it's not over. To finish the job, EPA needs to complete the cancer portion of the dioxin health report, which we hope will occur in the coming months. We're also calling on EPA to come up with a comprehensive plan of action to further reduce dioxin emissions and exposures. We'll be sure to keep you posted on how this issue develops. ♦

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CHEJ's Path of Leaders: A New Way to Honor Those Who Make a Difference



Leaders are everywhere in our lives, yet they are not always recognized as they should be. Now you can honor them with a designated spot on our new Path of Leaders in the virtual Honor Garden on CHEJ's website, which will be available this fall. Or you can pay tribute to someone who is already on the Path who has inspired you.

Why not honor your favorite leader and let them know how much you appreciate them and their sacrifices! Your donation will help CHEJ train future leaders.



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