

El Pueblo Para El Aire y Agua Limpio/People for Clean Air and Water
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment

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CHEM WASTE RECEIVES MASSIVE FINE FOR MAJOR PCB VIOLATIONS AT KETTLEMAN HILLS TOXIC DUMP

US Environmental Protection Agency Fines Chemical Waste Management \$302,100
for Toxic Spills, Illegal Management and Disposal of PCBs

**Community & Environmental Justice Groups Call on Agencies to Deny Chem Waste's
Applications for Permits to Expand the Giant Kettleman City Toxic Waste & PCB Dump**

Kettleman City, CA – Kettleman City residents, their community groups and environmental justice allies cheered the news that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today fined Chemical Waste Management, Inc. \$302,100 for failure to properly manage PCBs at its Kettleman Hills Hazardous Waste Landfill.

In order to protect human health and the environment, EPA regulations and facility permit requirements require that PCBs are properly tracked, stored and disposed – and Chem Waste was found to have seriously violated regulations and permit requirements.

“This huge fine by US EPA validates our concerns that Chem Waste is not the safe company they claim to be,” said Maricela Mares-Alatorre, Kettleman City resident and spokesperson for the community group El Pueblo Para El Aire y Agua Limpio/People for Clean Air and Water. “We don’t know what is causing the birth defects, but we do know that this toxic polluter needs to be shut down for good so our community is protected.”

“This is an enormous fine for enormously serious violations of our nation’s hazardous waste laws,” said Bradley Angel, Executive Director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice. “Chem Waste is a chronic polluter with a long history of violations and pollution, and it is about time one of our government agencies is finally doing their job and cracking down on Chem Waste.”

"Given the extreme toxicity of PCBs and the current health concerns in Kettleman City, Chem Waste's disregard for hazardous waste disposal laws is inexcusable," said Ingrid Brostrom, staff attorney with the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment. "These violations demonstrate that regulatory agencies need to do more to protect the public from toxic releases."

Community and environmental justice groups are calling on the US EPA, state agencies and the Valley Air District to deny Chem Waste's request for permits to expand the dump. The groups are also calling on state agencies to reopen their birth defect investigation in light of the recent PCB violations and the big US EPA fine.

During a series of 2010 inspections, EPA investigators found that Chem Waste improperly managed PCBs at the facility. Further analysis revealed spills next to the facility's PCB Storage and Flushing Building. Samples taken by EPA and CWM in and around the building detected PCBs at elevated levels ranging from 2.1 parts per million (ppm) up to 440 ppm. These levels are above the regulatory limit of 1 ppm and, in soil, demonstrate that PCBs were improperly disposed of in violation of federal law.

In addition to the PCB releases, Chem Waste failed to fully comply with information and decontamination requirements. A PCB container label and some materials containing PCBs did not display essential data required by federal law. EPA investigations also found that Chem Waste failed to decontaminate PCB handling areas prior to continued use.

Tests have shown that PCBs cause cancer in animals and are suspected carcinogens in humans. Acute PCB exposure can also adversely affect the nervous, immune, and endocrine systems as well as liver function. PCBs have also been linked to birth defects.

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