

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES OPPOSE POLLUTERS REQUEST FOR LESS OVERSIGHT IN POMPTON LAKES**

#### ***Local and state groups fight DuPont's proposal to weaken State requirements for groundwater monitoring during a NJDEP hearing in Pompton Lakes.***

**November 15, 2010 – Pompton Lakes, New Jersey** – A coalition of local citizen groups and state environmental organizations today expressed their opposition to the significant weakening of state oversight for the Pompton Lakes DuPont Works Chemical Site. Known for poisoning the community of Pompton Lakes, DuPont Chemical has requested to reduce groundwater monitoring and reporting, potentially expanding a larger threat to the health and safety of the residents who are already suffering greatly by a toxic plume of poison gases in their homes.

At the request of the residents, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is holding a public hearing today and soliciting comments until November 30th, 2010 to gather comments regarding DuPont's request for a permanent permit by rule to replace their current, stricter 5-year individual discharge to groundwater permit. The current permit that DuPont holds is required to be renewed every 5 years, where as the request what is known as a "Permit By Rule" would become permanent, revoking the publics' rights to comment on the pump and treat system, reducing the amount of public involvement.

Members from Citizens for A Clean Pompton Lakes, Pompton Lakes Residents for Environmental Integrity (PLREI), Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), Edison Wetlands Association (EWA) and New Jersey Sierra Club will testify in opposition of DuPont's request.

"It is insulting to this poisoned community that NJDEP would even entertain this request from this well founded and politically connected polluter that has destroyed the Pompton Lakes community" said EWA Executive Director Robert Spiegel. "The last thing this hard working community needs is less oversight, less opportunity for comment periods, and less monitoring. If anything, the State and Federal agencies should increase monitoring and oversight in the case of this polluter"

Should DuPont's request be accepted, their monitoring and reporting of water levels to NJDEP would significantly decrease from twelve times a year to four times a year, causing significant time lapse between reports. Frequent monitoring and reporting is especially critical in a town where over 450 homes are suffering from toxic gases that are entering their basements from chemicals in DuPont's contaminated groundwater. If toxic chemicals were reported to exceed the state and federal health and environmental standards, residents would be exposed for a longer period of time.

"Comprehensive and frequent oversight is needed and has been non-existent for over two decades," said CCPL Executive Director Lisa Riggiola. "Instead of weakening what already exists to regulate environmental clean-up remediation, the citizens deserve and are in dire need of serious action to strengthen monitoring of work being performed by DuPont. Therefore it is unacceptable to the residents of Pompton Lakes for the permit changes to even be a consideration."

“DuPont must be required to clean up, not cover up and dodge community oversight,” said New Jersey PEER Director Bill Wolfe. “If DuPont does not voluntarily rescind the permit-by-rule application, then NJDEP or USEPA must do so because it would violate both state and federal regulation. This has now become a test of USEPA and NJDEP commitments to transparency and community involvement.”

PLREI discovered the obscure public notice published in the Suburban Trends on July 25, 2010. They challenged the notice in a letter to NJDEP dated August 12, calling for an extended comment period and pointing out the subversive flaws in the public notice.

“We have been in constant conversation with the independent testing and installation contractors dealing with the NJDEP and the EPA. While DuPont is requesting less oversight, both agencies are subjecting the independent contractors to unreasonable oversight,” said PLREI Executive Director Regina Sisco. “Why should the polluter be allowed a free pass while the independent contractors are put under a microscope for every little detail of their work? Why are the state and federal agencies continuing to refuse to acknowledge both residents' environmental groups? The residents should have been contacted directly when this public notice was published.”

“We need the NJDEP and USEPA to step up to protect the people of Pompton Lakes. The situation in Pompton Lakes has gone on far too long, putting too many people at risk,” stated Jeff Tittel, Director of New Jersey Sierra Club. “Allowing this plume of toxic material is unconscionable. NJDEP and USEPA have to take immediate action to protect the public health and safety of the people of Pompton Lakes.”

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