



Oregon Updater

Railyard Toxic Plume OTA helps neighboring communities

In 2003, the Trainsong, River Road, Bethel and Whiteaker Neighborhoods joined with Oregon Toxics Alliance (OTA) to form the Railroad Pollution Coalition (RPC).

The purpose of the Coalition is to represent the public interest in the investigation and ultimate clean-up of the chemical contamination that has spread from the Eugene railyard into surrounding neighborhoods.

The Coalition has been meeting with the Department of Environmental Quality staff to:

- Watchdog the investigation.
- Identify additional testing needs.
- Push for action to protect nearby residents.

OTA and the RPC have called on DEQ to expand the investigation to ensure that all contamination is identified and that it be removed without further harm to residents.

In February of this year, the DEQ approved Union Pacific's Human Health Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment identifies significant health risks, including cancer, that may

exist for certain Trainsong residents who are exposed to toxic gasses that travel up through the soil from the polluted groundwater. There is also concern for River Road residents who use their well water.

The Risk Assessment's conclusions identify the need for immediate action on the part of the DEQ to protect those Trainsong residents whose health is threatened by the exposure to toxic gasses. OTA is calling on DEQ and Union Pacific to provide immediate funding to address this need.

We held a meeting for Trainsong and River Road neighbors on September 12th to share this information, and to discuss how residents can protect their families and participate in pushing the railyard clean-up forward.

More than 55 neighborhood residents attended the meeting as did Mayor Kitty Percy, Councilor Andrea Ortiz and Senator Vicki Walker.

OTA will continue to keep up the pressure and spearhead community action!



Benzene Campaign Do your part for clean air—Don't top off!

The top toxin on EPA's list of cancer-causing chemicals is the target of OTA's "Don't Top Off!" campaign.

Exposure to benzene, a chemical present in gasoline vapors, is strongly linked with a higher risk of childhood leukemia.

New research reveals that children living in the vicinity of gas stations have a seven-fold greater chance of being diagnosed with leukemia.

Benzene vapors are released when tanker trucks deliver gasoline to underground storage tanks at neighborhood gas stations.

Significant quantities of benzene are also emitted whenever a car's gas tank is topped off. This allows vapors that would normally be captured inside the gas tank to escape into the air. (And, topping off wastes gas as the fuel you just paid for evaporates into the air.)

OTA is pursuing a two-pronged approach to reduce benzene emissions.

First, we are encouraging petroleum distributors to require their drivers to use the *existing* vapor control devices on all deliveries.

Oregon's DEQ currently only requires vapor control in the Portland, Salem and Medford metropolitan areas.

Tyree Oil, a regional petroleum distributor, has already stepped up to the challenge and changed their company policy to require vapor control equipment for all deliveries.

Our campaign also provides for individual action that each of us can take to reduce benzene in our community. OTA is providing stickers for you to put on your car's gas tank door that read "Do Your Part for Clean Air! Don't Top Off!"

These 2 1/2" stickers serve as reminders for gas station attendants to keep benzene inside gas tanks and out of nearby neighborhoods – and their workplace!



Strength in Numbers!

Join other OTA folks for a party and launch of our **Don't Top Off! Campaign** **November 18th at 7:30PM.**

Details coming soon!



Free!

Popcorn Review

OTA members are invited to view **Environmental Links to Cancer** featuring Sandra Steingraber PhD. Steingraber is known as "the new Rachael Carson." Her concise 80 minute message is well worth watching.

WHEN: Thursday Nov 30 at 7:00-8:45pm. Film rolls at 7:15 sharp!

WHERE: At the West Eugene home of Tom and Victoria Schneider.

Please RSVP to: victoriacare@gmail.com

Popcorn & herb tea will be served.

Stickers for your gas tank door!



Call us to obtain your stickers!
541-405-8800

Actions of our Air Quality Committee

In recent months, the Oregon Toxics Alliance pursued a number of projects designed to reduce industrial toxic emissions in Oregon.

In addition to constant monitoring of DEQ's proposed rulemaking in matters affecting air quality in Oregon, OTA board members and staff are scrutinizing pollution permits issued to Oregon's largest industrial polluters. Our goal is to reduce our communities' exposure to toxic and carcinogenic emissions.

Our actions include:

Formally opposing the modification of an industrial pollution permit for Roseburg Forest Products that proposes to allow very high levels

of emissions of several dangerous pollutants.

Maintaining regular communication with Oregon DEQ air quality managers and EPA West Coast staff regarding implementation of the new rules slated for the Oregon wood products industry in 2008.

Sending formal testimony and comments to the EPA and DEQ regarding implementation of newly proposed "ambient air standards" and maintenance strategies for health-threatening particulate matter, known as PM 2.5.

Mounting a formal objection to DEQ's procedures in the implementation of

proposed ozone standards for Portland and Salem. Because ozone is so corrosive, it damages the bronchioles and alveoli in the lungs and contributes to asthma and chronic lung disease. OTA objected to the DEQ's plan to allow for significant increase in industrial emissions of ozone. The increase is called a "growth allowance" for industrial sources.

The Air Toxics Committee welcomes your assistance and comments. We work to see that *economic or job growth* does not, in reality, mean *pollution* growth allowed by law for industrial polluters. ♦♦♦

New Local and National Partnerships!

No-Spray Zones for Schools and Expansion of Oregon's Pesticide Notification

A recent grant from the John Merck Fund will help OTA expand our Right-to-Know work by creating new programs with national and local partnerships.

OTA is developing fresh strategies to give Oregonians the *right to know* and to protect themselves from pesticides and herbicides being applied near schools, homes, and residential properties.

OTA's ultimate goal is to reform our state's industry-directed chemical policies by mandating safe alternatives to harmful pesticide use.

A new addition to OTA's Community Partnerships is the Forestland Dwellers,

a consortium of western Oregon residents whose health and properties have been impacted by herbicide spray operations carried out by private logging companies.

Forestland Dwellers has a dedicated core group experienced in tracking and mapping forest spraying. Together, our two organizations will be using this data to demonstrate the extent of herbicides used near homes and schools. In fact, our recent tracking of upcoming forest spraying has revealed that five schools will be less than a mile from an aerial spray of herbicides after massive clear cuts.

The joint project seeks to protect children's health by establishing no-spray zones around school grounds and day

care centers, and to make the case for expanding the state's pesticide notification system before our state legislature in 2007. Our national partner, Pesticide Action Network (PAN), is based in San Francisco. PAN is a powerful national group with strong research and testing programs.

There is no program for monitoring pesticides in Oregon. Please contact OTA if you want to be involved with our pesticide/herbicide tracking project, or learn more about how to receive notifications about pending forest spraying.

To learn more about herbicide applications in Lane County, go to www.forestlanddwellers.org ♦♦♦

Precautionary Purchasing

Would you support a proposal to formulate the City of Eugene's purchasing decisions on life-cycle cost analyses? That is exactly what OTA has been advocating for in our role as a member of Mayor Piercy's Sustainable Business Initiative Task Force.

OTA's Executive Director, Lisa Arkin, served as one of the sixteen-member task force that recently published their report and made a set of ten recommendations addressing sustainability policies to the Eugene City Council.

Eugene's City Council voted on 10/23 to approve a recommendation to direct the City Manager to take the necessary steps to create an Office of Sustainability that

will provide technical assistance for businesses seeking to reduce toxics use. A citizen's Commission on Sustainability would help shape the policies implemented by the staffed Office.

One of OTA's contributions was to educate the task force members on the precautionary principle and help shape the recommendation for a non-toxics purchasing policy for the City of Eugene. This is important because many toxic materials are embedded in products.

By adopting a precautionary purchasing policy, Eugene could build a market for sustainable goods while incorporating environmental and human health considerations into purchasing decisions.

You can view the full report and appendix with an easy download at: http://cwch.uoregon.edu/programs/SBJD/SBI_tools.html.

OTA members in Eugene can play a very important role by making sure the Eugene Budget Committee fully funds the creation of the Office of Sustainability and the Citizen's Commission, and particularly the sustainable (i.e., non-toxic or full-cost accounting) purchasing policy.

OTA will keep abreast of the progress on the Sustainability policies and keep our members informed!

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