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Activist John Nasarzewski

•Right to Act Campaign
•Hazardous Waste Siting
•Military Toxics
•Zero Discharge

MICHIGAN TOXICS WATCH

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Environmentally-Sound Economic Plan Proposed for Upper Michigan

Since last summer, a grassroots group called Friends of the Land of Keweenaw (FOLK) has been fighting a proposal to build a huge pulp-and-paper mill on the shores of Lake Superior's Keweenaw Bay. Against long odds, FOLK has already scored several impressive successes. First, it pressured the James River Corporation to drop out of the project. The group filed a successful lawsuit (along with the National Wildlife Federation and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs) to block a state grant which would have allowed local mill promoters to buy enough land to consolidate the proposed site.

FOLK recognizes, however, that merely being an effective NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) group doesn't make That's you a leader in the community. why FOLK members have spent the last six months researching and writing Sustainable Development for the Keweenaw, a 30-page report which mixes philosophical precepts with practical steps local people can take to get control of their environmental and future. Conventional economic thinking devalues community well-being by not accounting for the environmental impacts of development. by "progress" Also convention,





defined as unlimited, ever-expanding economic activity. Environmental damage and resource depletion are not part of the "balance sheets." Sustainable development, by contrast, measures progress by how well community prosperity (which includes far more than money) and environmental protection support each other.

This is a two-way street. Because all economic activity depends on natural resources, conservation and environmental protection are necessary to attain and sustain prosperity. On the other hand, if peoples' material needs are ignored, they have every incentive to abuse the environment for short-term gian. So sustainable development encourages economic activity designed to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future inhabitants of Earth to meet theirs.

For FOLK, community prosperity means a clean and healthy environment which maintains local biodiversity and supports and energy-efficient economy; this economy, in turn, provides people with satisfying work lives and decent, dependable incomes. Every community will have to find its own path to making this happen. In Sustainable Development in the Keweenaw, FOLK lays out options for supporting existing small and medium-sized business, attracting

appropriate new businesses, stopping the "dollar-drain" out of the local economy, combining environmental and entrepreneurial education, encouraging local control of business, and much more.

Here are some of the options we came up with, tailored to our area. Start an "alumni reunion" incentives program to bring successful business-owning graduates back to the Keweenaw (along with their businesses); weatherization blitzes to stem energy wastage, which saps our local economy of money that might otherwise be discretionary income; encourage timber industries which foster selective industries selective man agement of our hardwood production forests rather than create a market for clear cut pulpwood; promote inn-to-inn cross-country skiing (we average 180 inches of snow a year but have no real cross country resorts); tout our computer-literate yet low-cost area as a "natural" for telemarketers use maple sugaring and apple cidering as a bridge between part-time farmers and fullblown sustainable agriculture.

Many of the ideas we came up with ourselves while others were borrowed from sources such as Our Common Future and the Rocky Mountain Institute's Economic Renewal Program. All these proposals are meant to be consonant with the unique social and environmental qualities of our area. We want to fight the standard prescription for economic development, which would make the Keweenaw look and feel like everywhere else

(including environmental degradation). FOLK has tapped into an incredible amount of "hidden energy" by doing this report -- energy which exists in all communities, just waiting for an issue to galvanize it. Everyday people want environmental protection to be part of economic development decisions. It's our "business leaders" who will take some convincing -- but even some of them are ready to listen. You are probably already part of a local environmental group. Organize a sustainable development dialogue and open it up to the community. It's a visionary way to start re-ordering the economic agenda, rather than always fighting rear-guard battles to defend the environment against the onslaught of conventional thinking.

by Dave Harmon, FOLK

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Management or Mismanagement: The Time is Now to Stop Irresponsible Siting of Hazardous Waste

N ext month citizens have a chance to speak out about Michigan's draft five year hazardous waste plan. Public hearings, scheduled for the first two weeks of February, are sponsored by the state Hazardous Waste Policy Committee (HWPC), appointed by Governor Blanchard under the state's Hazardous Waste Management Act (Act 64 and amendments). The hearings cap a year long process which must consider public comment before a final report is submitted to the Natural Resources Commission for adoption.

A strong response from the environmental and labor community is crucial to ensure a five-year emphasis on waste reduction rather than facility siting.

The following summary highlights the committee's three main areas of recommendations to date.



COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS: SUMMARY

1. Waste ReductionSeveral positive recommendations in reduction are proposed--including new waste reduction facility planning legislation and a statewide policy goal of 50% reduction in hazardous wastes by 1995. However, these gains may be undermined by the position ultimately taken on facility siting.

2. Education Information Transfer- The committee recommends an increase in education about household hazardous waste the alternatives and reinstatement of funding for certified local health departments for small quantity generator inspection programs. The Committee refused to adopt a point-of-purchase consumer education program like that in lowa's Groundwater Protection

3, Ca Siting- The Capacity and Committee recommends minor improvements to the state's siting law (such as funding for "host" communities), local however, the plan basically endorses the existing process, which encourages facility siting. Key issues not adequately addressed include: 1) the potentially strong negative impact on waste reduction efforts from additional facility siting, and 2) need for additional facilities cannot be clearly demonstrated.



Facility Siting: Partner or Foe to Waste Reduction?

The critical question concerning the compatibility of instituting waste reduction goals while simultaneously siting additional disposal facilities was not addressed by the committee. Moreover, the committee could not agree whether there should be at least two commercial hazardous waste landfills operating within the state, or only one.. Committee members opposing the proposal to site two facilities made sound arguments that argue equally well against the siting of any landfills.

Siting is a disincentive to waste reduction. The Ecology Center's Toxics Project Director Charles Griffith, who closely followed the Committee's followed the deliberations on behalf of environmental groups, agrees: To promote major reduction efforts on the one hand, and continued easy access to disposal facilities on the other, sends a mixed message to waste generators. The key at this point in our dismal history of 'hazardous waste management' is to send a new and clear message: 'reduction must come first'.'

Unfortunately, the drive to site new HW disposal facilities may be the biggest obstacle to industry waste reduction efforts. A more conspiratorial view would suggest that many proposals for new waste reduction programs are simply an effort to get the public to accept new (and highly profitable) disposal facilities. For example, solid waste: as the public became less willing to landfill and accept new proposals, incineration proponents began recycling programs. The result has often been big disposal facilities and ineffective recycling efforts. This is especially true for massburn incinerators which require tremendous amounts of capital and frequently rely on the destruction of significant volumes of recyclable material

to be economically viable. Unless recycling is the central objective, disposal interests tend to dominate.

The same is true for hazardous wastes. Siting a major new hazardous waste landfill or inclnerator within the state would undermine any significant waste reduction effort. If waste reduction is truly the top priority and disposal a last resort strategy, then it would seem that the state's primary goal should be to discourage disposal by limiting the siting of new facilities. As Griffith states, "Disposal and reduction are not complimentary strategies--in fact, they are diametrically opposed--and one of them is vastly superior."

The Question of Need:

There is no proven need for additional disposal facilities. However, the state's current siting process--which overrides local zoning powers--is based on a presumption of statewide need. The state's own Capacity Assurance Plan (CAP), required by EPA, concludes there is adequate regional hazardous waste disposal capacity among Midwest states for the next 20 years.

While the waste industry was quick to point out deficiencies with the CAP, the Haz Waste Committee did not resolve the question of capacity needs. The failure to substantiate the need for additional facilities undermines the basis of the state's current policy. If the CAP is right, and we do have adequate capacity, the state's siting process is a double insult to communities faced with a facility siting proposal.

Hans Posselt is an Augusta Township Trustee and member of the Augusta Environmental Strategy Committee opposed to Wayne Disposal's proposed hazardous waste landfill and incinerator complex. He believes a constitutional issue is at stake: "Without a clear proven need, and as long as there are feasible and prudent alternatives, the state has no constitutional right to preempt our local zoning

powers."

There is also a basic issue of fairness. Kimberly Dunbar of Michigan Citizens Against Toxic Substances (MCATS) says, "It is ironic that Michigan law has provisions forcing for facilities commercial unwilling 'host' communities, but we completely lack any requirements for reducing toxic wastes on the part of industry." Although the proposed plan recommends waste reduction legislation to mandate facility

comment to be in the

planning and reporting requirements, reductions would not be required. While the waste management hierarchy is supposed to favor reduction first, disposal options may still have the edge.

Magnet for Out-of-State Wastes?

The ante is particularly high for a potential community like Augusta Township since hazardous waste landfill or incinerator will act as a strong magnet for out-of-state wastes. The waste industry has national markets and is protected by interstate commerce law. Thus, while siting a facility-prusumably for use of in-state industry--we may actually do more to solve other states' problems than our own. Arguably, this has already occured in Michigan where the current "crisis" in landfill in landfill capacity resulted in part from out-of-state wastes.

Any community in Michigan could become the home of a disposal facility accepting national and perhaps international wastes. Without limitations on imports or capacity size, the market such a facility could serve may be large.



While a state-appointed Site Review Board (SRB) could reject such a proposal, there are no criteria in state law that in any way require limits. Newly-elected Governor Engler has yet to appoint the SRB members who will decide on future proposals.

Citizen Input Needed: Public Hearings Scheduled

Whether the Committee addresses the critical questions regarding facility siting will depend on the strength of public comment. Thus far the Committee has been divided on the issue, unable to recommend any significant change from current policy. Environmental and community groups active on these issues are recommending that the Committee support the following positions:

1) Suspension of the siting process for any new commercial disposal facilities in the state until the need for such facilities can be clearly established through a credible needs study (such as the CAP).

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2) Quick passage of strong waste reduction legislation within the state (as generally supported in the Committee report), including the requirement that generators from other states meet the same standards.

3) Limitations to be placed on maximum landfill capacity, along with other disincentives to waste imports, in the event that need can be established.

While all of these proposals will require eventual legislative action, as a legislatively-mandated body the Committee's recommendations may carry significant weight. It is not yet clear what influence the new Engler administration may have over the plan's final stages. One thing is certain: the sooner Michigan's environmental community makes its voice heard the more likely it will have a positive impact on the direction of the state's hazardous waste programs.

SAY NO TO MORE HAZ WASTE DISPOSAL

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON STATE HAZ WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Michigan may become a national hazardous waste dumping ground if the state does not now take a stand against additional siring. The state's Hazardous Waste Policy Committee (HWPC) has proposed a plan that calls for waste reduction, but so far has failed to challenge our current approach to siting more disposal facilities.

The HWPC must hear from concerned citizens! The state's plan must:

1) JUSTIFY THE NEED FOR MORE HAZ WAST E-DISPOSAL SITES. It has not been adequately determined that Michigan NEEDS more sites—unless it wants to be a perional dumning ground.

be a national dumping ground.

2) RECOGNIZE THAT
ADDITIONAL DISPOSAL SITES
WILL DISCOURAGE WASTE
REDUCTION. Calling for waste
reduction while at the same time
providing more dumping grounds for
wastes does not give companies the
proper incentive to reduce their waste
generation and toxics use—so workers
and communities pay the price.

We must send the Committee a strong message that reducing wastes must come first. No new facilities should be sited in our communities before strong waste reduction laws are in place, and need for facilities must be demonstrated.

Public Hearings on the HazWaste Policy Committee's Draft Plan will be held in the beginning of February at the four locations. See the calendar (page 11) for detrails.

ZERO DISCHARGE ALLIANCE



Some Persistent and Bioaccumulative Chemicals Contaminating the Great Lakes Region

PERSISTENT: Trichlorfon Carbon tetrachloride Acetamide Dichlorvos Carbaryl Chloroform 1,1,1- Trichloroethane Bromomethane Chloromethane Methyl iodide Acetonitrile Dichloromethane Carbon disulfide Ethylene oxide Dichlorobromo-methane Phosgene Propylene oxide Hexachloro-cyclopentadiene Epichlorohydrin 1.2-Dichloroethane Tetrachloroethylene Captan Ethyl acrylate Ethyl encimine BIOACCUMULATIVE: Chlordane Lindane 4-Dimethylaminoazobenzene Carbaryl Methoxychlor Heptachlor Hexachlorocyclopentadiene Quintozene Dibutyl phthalate Hexachloro-1, 3-butadiene Pentachlorophenol Napthalene 1,2-Dichlorobenzene
C.I. Solvent Yellow 3 1,4-Dichlorobenzene Phenol Di (2-ethyl-hexyl) phthalate n-Dioctyl phthalate Hexachlorobenzene

Anthracene 1,2,4-Trichlorobenzene

Aldrin

Trifluralin

Dichlorobenzene (mixed isomers)

ZERO DISCHARGE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Over the past year, a network of organisations and grassroots activists have come together under the banner of the Zero Discharge Alliance to promote the goal and philosophy of xero discharge of toxics into the Great Lakes. What follows is a Statement of Principles adopted by participating groups. Groups throughout the basin are welcome, and encouraged, to sign on. The next meeting of the Alliance is scheduled for March 16 (location to be announced). May 6-12 will be a coordinated Great Lakes Zero Discharge Action Week. Call the Ecology Center (313) 663-2400 or watch this newsletter for more information.

Zero Discharge means ending the use, the production and, thus, the disposal of persistent bioand accumulative toxic Organizations substances. and individuals around the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River Basin, have agreed to work together to promote and implement the goal of Zero Discharge as defined in this Statement of Principles. We will do so through campaigns to reformulate industrial processes, to ban the use production and/or persistent toxic substances and to change regulatory systems.

In 1978, Canada and the U.S. signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to protect the Great Lake/St. Lawrence River Basin. This agreement calls on both societies to virtually eliminate the input of persistent toxic substances into the Great Lake ecosystem. It goes on to say: the philosophy adopted for control of inputs of persistent toxic substances shall be zero discharge."

Until recently, both societies have viewed the concept of Zero Discharge as more rhetorical than real. Now, pushed by the strength of the environmental movement of the Great Lakes Basin and by a growing public demand for pollution prevention and toxics use reduction, the International Joint Commission is beginning public discussion on real steps to achieve the Zero Discharge

goal. Responsibility shifts back to the environmental community to create the popular will to move this important process forward.

For us "zero" means zero. Pollution must be prevented before it is generated. Production processes (including agriculture) must be reformulated so that these toxic substances are not used, produced or discharged. "Zero" does not mean reducing discharges beneath some arbitrary level or even beneath the level of detection. Zero means none.

The use of the term "discharge" is not limited to a single environmental medium. It applies to toxic discharges into water, air, landfill, product, etc. Nor can persistent toxics be eliminated by shifting them from one medium to another or by attempting to recycle them after they have been produced.

The Zero Discharge goal applies to more than just a small list of the most notorious toxic substances. Unless strong contrary evidence is presented, it applies in all cases where there is good reason to believe the substance itself is a persistent and/or bioaccumulative toxic or when persistent toxics are generated during its production, use or disposal.

In our view, at stake is the future health and survivability of wildlife, humans and other life in the ecosystem.

To sign on to the above Statement of Principles, write to: Zero Discharge Alliance, P.O. Box 32246, Detroit, MI 48232.



The Right-to-Act Monitor

A Joint Publication of the Right to Act Campaign and the Toxics Reduction Project

What Do Labor and Environmental Activists Have in Common? And What is "The Right to Act?"

Labor/Environmental Conference Launches Campaign in Michigan

TWO REGIONAL ACTION COMMITTEES HAVE FORMED AS A RESULT OF THE CONFERENCE

- 1. Downriver Area Right to Act Coalition- Next meeting: not yet scheduled. Issues this group discussed included health and safety and environmental concerns at the Mazda plant, the proposed hazardous waste disposal facility in the salt mines of Detroit, and the contamination of a small creek in the Downriver area.
- 2. Ypsilanti Area Right to Act Coalition. Next meetings: February 9, and March 16, 1991 to meet with area residents concerned about emissions from the two target plants. UAW Local 735 10:00am-12:00 noon.

Editor's Note: On December 8th, over 150 labor and environmental activists participated in a conference to launch the 'Right to Act' Campaign in Michigan. The Right to Act Monitor (which will appear in the pages of this publication) is a product of that conference. In it, activists can exchange information about local attempts to form labor/environmental coalitions in Michgan.

*T he Right to Act means using our collective power to make change, with or without more laws furthering environmental and workplace rights" declared Peter Dooley, from the UAW International Health and Safety Division and Right to Act Coalition member. The Right to Act is about our collective power to demand changes and protect ourselves. By combining the organizing power of the grassroots environmental movement and labor's health and safety movement, we strengthen ties between two groups whose power has often been played against the other.

Dooley spoke at an organizers' training session at the conference, which focused on tactics grassroots and rank and file organizers can use to gain greater rights. Dooley and other veterans of Michigan's toxics movement cut their teeth on the Right-to-Know Campaign in the mid-1980's.

"That statewide fight saw the mighty forces of workers and environmental activists win greater rights in the workplace and the community" said Scott Tobey, Professor in the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at

Michigan State and a Campaign member.

For environmentalists, the Right to Act enables community activists to sit at the bargaining table with corporate officials and negotiate toxic reductions. Tim Eder of the National Wildlife Federation told conference participants "the existing approach to pollution control has not worked. We need to target reductions and substitutions in the production process before pollution or workplace hazards are oreated."

The Right to Act campaign is broader than a campaign for legislative mandate. It encourages communities to use neighborhood pressure, the power of organizing, and the media, to force a cleanup of their local environment including a reduction in the use and generation of toxics. In a few communities across the United States, activists and industry leaders have signed Good Neighbor Agreements' where industry has agreed to reduce the use and emissions of toxic substances. This community negotiation power will be further strengthened through coalition s with labor.

For workers, the Right to Act means fundamental health and safety protection in the workplace. This includes the right to refuse unsafe work, the right to inspect workplaces and to review employer health and safety provisions. The goal of the campaign is to harness the power of collective action in the workplace regardless of legislative mandate. The campaign also targets workers in unorganized shops. "Workers

around the country have used collective action to secure safer workplaces in both organized and unorganized shops, Donele Wilkins of Southeast Michigan Coalition on Occupational Safety and Health (SEMCOSH) told activists at the conference.

Several speakers at the conference warned that the major threat to a coalition of workers and environmentalists is corporate job blackmail. Jobs, they claim, are threatened as a cost of adhering to stricter environmental regulations. The threat may be real and workers and environmentalists may differ on many issues, but more often the threat is just that. Keith Mestrich, Food and Allied Service Trade union activist and presentor at the conference, spoke about obstacles to coalition building and myths which divide the groups: Companies say they'll lose money, but most facilities that reduce toxics and substitute safer chemicals save money in the long run, make their workplaces safer and become better environmental neighbors."

In several communities around the United States, workers and environmentalists have forged alliances in creative ways to support their common goals. In Minnesota, a unionized shop was able to improve health and safety provisions through contract negotiations because of community pressure for reduced emissions at the plant. In turn, the workers' contract included a mandated reduction in environmental emissions.

In the Northwest, forest preservation groups and loggers

liscovered common ground in a "mmitment to sustainable logging and opposition to the less labor intensive and more toxic chemical removal of underbrush.

At the Right to Act Conference on December 8, participants were divided into regional groups so labor and environmental activists could talk about ways in which the two groups could work together in their own communities. Several regional groups were successful in developing a Regional Action Plan. Those groups have scheduled future meetings (see schedule below).

For information on how you can develop an action plan for your community, or to learn more about Right to Act, call the Ecology Center's Toxics Reduction Project, (313) 663-2400 or SEMCOSH (313) 961-3345. To become a member of the Right to Act Coalition, contact Scott Tobey, (517) 355-5070.

Conference packets are available for \$3.00 for those interested in background materials on Right to Act and Toxics Reduction issues (see Resources, page 11 MTW)



Activist John Nasarzewski: Fighting 'Chemical Dependence' Downriver

W hen John Nasarzewski saw two kids playing in Monguagon Creek he stopped to warn them against getting too close to what he knew was a dangerous toxic stew. The boys told him about their friend Sammy who developed blisters on his body after playing in the Creek. John went to Sammy's home and met the boy who had been diagnosed with "probable chemical burns" on his hands and feet. Sammy's story prompted Downriver Citizens for a Safe Environment (DCSE), Nasarzewski's grassroots group, to launch a campaign to force the clean-up of Monguagon Creek.

Mystery Chemicals in Monguagon Creek

Grosse Ile divides the Detroit River and forms Trenton Channel along its west bank. Trenton Channel is a major depositional sediment zone for the Detroit River and a waste receptacle for area industry. At the northern end of the channel, Monguagon Creek flows into Trenton Channel at a rate 10,000,000 gallons a day greater than its natural flow. Monguagon Creek is the discharge creek for Atochem North America Incorporated, (formerly Pennwalt) a company which has been dumping industrial waste into the community waterway for

In 1987, Atochem dumped 15,000 pounds of hazardous chemicals into the water, and in 1988 they increased that amount to almost 20,000 pounds. Their combined air emissions in those two years was 387,000 pounds. The company has occasionally violated permitted levels of discharges, and in 1985 was fined \$1.1 million for a 75,000 gallon release of improperly stored

hazardous chemicals.

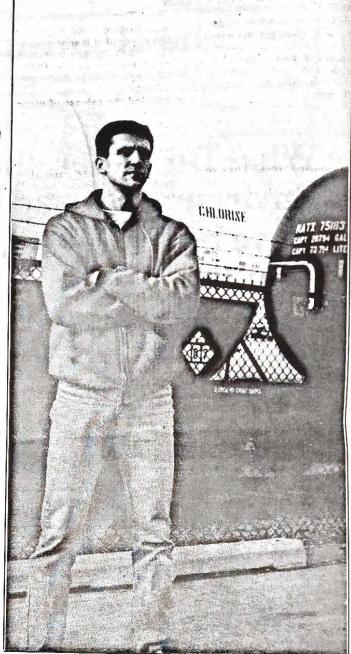
It is the water discharges, however, and their contamination of a small local creek which has mobilized citizens in the downriver area.

A study by the US Environmental Protection Agency, released in December 1988, lists among its conclusions: "Sediments of the Trenton Channel are heavily contaminated with a complex mixture of heavy metals and organic contaminants which have resulted from decades of discharges and subsequent deposition to the sediment." The major chlorinated compounds were "centered in the vicinity of Monguagon Creek and extended southward." Further, "sediment and water samples from the Trenton Channel impaired metabolism, reproduction, feeding, growth, behavior, and survival" for a variety of organisms tested from bacteria to fish.

The study concludes the area has "symptoms indicative of a severely degraded ecosystem."

The smoking gun implicating Atochem is a study by Indiana University scientists definitively linking "an unusual pollutant (2,4-Ditert-pentylphenol)" found in the creek to "a single point source" in the area. The only company producing or using this unusual chemical is Atochem. The chemical is so unique that it is being used to un derstand sediment movement in the Detroit River and Lake Erie.

Most frightening of all is the identification, in a 1989 study, of chemicals which "have not been previously reported in the literature and their environmental occurrence has never been documented."



Most frightening of all is the identification...of chemicals which "have not been previously reported in the literature and their environmental occurrence has never been documented."

Monguguan Creek Clean-up Committee

On a Saturday morning in Wyandotte, the Monguagon Creek Cleanup Committee is meeting to develop strategies to achieve the cleanup of the creek. Sammy, the young boy who fell into the creek, is there with his grandparents. "I was catching turtles and I fell in the mud, hands first. It was burning on my skin. A while later I got water blisters on my hands and feet."

Sammy's grandfather once worked for what is now Atochem. He says he's seen burns enough to be sure, "those blisters on his hands

and feet were caustic burns." The preliminary medical diagnosis concurred. Hazel, Sammy's grandmother mentions the rash Sammy gets now from chlorine, or even

dish soap.
The group has asked the company to put up fences and warning signs to protect other children in the neighborhood from the contaminated areas. They've approached area schools about an educational program warning children of the dangers in the creek. Eventually, they'd also like the Creek cleaned up. "There are still about 100 families in the area, and at least 30 kids. That Creek is just open to any of them" says a local resident.

Thus far, company officials have been unwilling to discuss any action which would make them seem liable for the contamination. Although the plant manager has been quoted in the local papers as being concerned about the environment, "they don't want to be implicated in anything--they're playing it safe," says another DCSE member who met with representatives from Atochem to express the group's concerns.

Evolution of an Activist

When John Nasarzewski formed the Monguagon Creek Cleanup Committee, he was compelled by the urgency and seriousness of the situation. It was not, however, his first foray into environmental issues. John traces his activism around toxics to an article he read in the Detroit Free Press. The article summarized the recently published Toxic Release Inventory data for the Detroit area. One of the examples caught Nasarzewski's eye-Atochem's annual release of 180,000 pounds of ammonia. John remembers, "I'd lived in the area for 26 years then and had experienced that statistic first hand. On hot summer days when local air was trapped by a temperature inversion, the whole town would have a strong ammonia odor. "

John decided toinvestigate further. In 1989, after 650 hours of research he released a report detailing Wyandotte's toxic emissions. He was one of the first

individuals to make use of the data required of manufacturers by federal Superfund legislation passed in 1986. The report, "Wyandotte: A Chemically Dependent City" revealed the release of more than 464,000,000 pounds of toxic hazardous chemicals including carcinogens, mutagens, reproductive toxins and ozone depleters by twelve local companies. He also found violations of permits and failure by companies to prepare federally mandated emergency plans to protect the community in case of an accident.

The report ... revealed the release of more than 464,000,000 pounds of toxic hazardous chemicals including carcinogens, mutagens, reproductive toxins and ozone depleters

DCSE is Formed

During the year and a half that John was working on the report, he kept his eyes on the paper for community members who might share his concern about the local environment. When the report was released, John dropped off copies to local city councils, administrators, mayors, and those community members he identified as possibly interested. WJR, WWI. The Detroit Free Press and The News Herald covered the release of the report, but John didn't want it to stop



there. He arranged a meeting of people identified as important potential allies. At this meeting, the Downriver Citizens for a Safe Environment was formed. The group made presentations at area city councils and asked for their help. On Earth Day, DCSE presented a "Good Neighbor Agreement" to BASF Wyandotte Corporation, a multinational chemical company responsible for the release locally of almost pounds of 500,000 carcinogenic chemicals over a two year period.

In the agreement, DCSE asked the company to reduce toxic emissions by 50% within five years, to provide an accurate inventory of chemicals, and to commit to changing production processes to reduce or avoid toxic use. Similar reductions were being considered by other corporations like BASF, yet the company refused to negotiate with the citizens' group, or to indicate their willingness to go beyond current corporate policy. The company did set up a puppet citizen's advisory panel which DCSE members monitor.

In September of 1990, DCSE released a more extensive second report: Chemical Exposure Downriver: Progress and Problems," which highlighted the lack of improvements in emissions and some of the health effects resulting from exposure to these chemicals. The contamination of Monguagon Creek was also exposed. The report garnered more publicity, and raised further questions about the environmental degradation of the area. DCSE used the momentum generated by the report to form the Monguagon Creek Cleanup Committee.

Growing-Up in the Downriver Area

The middle child of a working class family, John's playground included the industrial wasteland of the downriver area. "As a kid we played in the tar pits on the vacant lot across from Atochem. Dead bird bones would collect on top of the pit - at the time we all thought that

"As a kid we played in the tar pits on the vacant lot across from Atochem. Dead bird bones would collect on top of the pit - at the time we all thought that was neat."

John remembers concern about miscarriages, cancers, and respiratory ailments in the community. People quietly speculated that local industry was responsible, but they also worked for these industries. "My grandfather worked as a crane operator at Wyandotte Chemical for most of his life. He had a valiant work record-he lost a finger once saving a man. He died of pancreas



cancer. I can't prove it, but I suspect workplace exposure made him sick. My brother also worked for a chemical company [BASF] for a couple of years. He got out but he had some stories to tell."

Raised to say the rosary during Lent in a conservative Polish-Catholic community; John went into the Marines after high school, was trained as an engineer and worked as a

toolmaker.

He maintains a close relationship with his community and his church. The pastor of John's parish reads the group's literature and is supportive. He has generously offered space and materials to DCSE. John's wife Kim says John is often thanked at church, and encouraged in his fight to clean up the area. John's family and friends are also supportive. John's parents have circulated petitions about Monguagon Creek. His brother uses nontoxic products in his work. John cautions, however, that it is a company town. "The City Council gave BASF a \$500,000 tax abatement. Still, there are those in the community who are concerned about the human cost of all these toxics."

Remember the annoiting of the sick" John says referring to the Catholic sacrament of annoiting those near death. "Priests in the area know people are dying. A Downriver priest told me about two men who worked together at the same process for the same company. They were friends. They both died of the same cancer.'

continued on page 8

John's activism is rooted in a commitment to community, spirituality, and a vision of greater self-determination for each individual. His Catholicism as an adult is more liberal than his upbringing. He is supportive of the work of the American Catholic Bishops, and talks about the importance of "emulating the work of Christ- doing good works for others."

Nasarzewski also talks about the importance of education. Currently a student at Eastern Michigan University working toward teaching certification in industrial arts, chemistry and earth sciences, he also teaches at a community college and a high school. "In the sixties, the educational establishment made a conscious decision to take self-empowerment out of the curriculum. I think the result is the apathetic 80's. A teacher I work with told me he used to teach his electronics students how to strike and how to sit down at the negotiating table- things which are an important part of a tradesman's work life. The school told him to cut it out or get fired."

Though once interested in social work, John's current emphasis is on the importance of self-directed, empowering teaching. "I believe it's better to teach at the high school level-there's more work to be done -there's more results- it's harder but it's where we most

Nasarzewski's enthusiasm for teaching is as evident as his commitment to and enthusiasm for environmental work. His commitment has included financial support. DCSE still struggles financially, relying on contributions from friends and family, a bit from donations, and a healthy chunk from John's pocket.

Life Out of Balance

The vacant lot where John played as a child is still there. Owned by Atochem, it is fenced on all sides and abuts a schoolyard. Considerable local mythology about the site abounds: "The old timers tell me there's poison gas from World War II buried there. Others say its just an old chemical dump. What I've been able to learn for sure is that until five years ago, Atochem had active brine wells on the property."

"The old timers tell me there's poison gas from World War II buried there. Others say its just an old chemical dump."

The vacant lot is another question mark, perhaps the next number to appear on the list of contaminated sites in

DCSE and other Downriver groups are also forming a coalition to fight the proposed location of a hazardous waste disposal facility in the old salt mines of Detroit (see sidebar). "There's



a lot to be done here, you have to remain vigilant."

John sees this struggle as a long-term commitment. "Once you know about these things, I don't know how you can turn back. What is right and proper needs to be done, though it will always come at some cost. We are out of balance- we need to learn balance. Right now I'm willing to make sacrifices to work for change because I can't accept things as they

By Tracey Easthope

Not Under My Backyard!

Groups Oppose Hazardous Waste Disposal in the Salt Mines

Walter Tomyn, haz waste mogul, mega developer and part owner of the Crystal Salt Mines, has resurrected his plan to dump hazardous waste in the mine 100 stories below Melvindale and southwest Detroit. Legislative rules changes proposed by the DNR would require Tomyn to own storage rights and rights of passage for the entire 1,100 acre mine before he can be issued any permit for haz waste disposal. That would make it very difficult for his plan to work, because of the cost, and because some entities plan to work, because of the cost, and because some entities have indicated a refusal to sell. The legislative rule-making body in Lansing, JCAR, will consider haz waste rules changes at the beginning of this year. If they fail to pass the proposed rules, the weaker federal regulations will be in effect, and Tomyn will have a green light to continue his

effort to site a facility in the mines.

Experts differ on the safety of hazardous waste disposal in salt deposits. Local residents and environmental groups are sure they don't want to try it out here though.

Their concerns go beyond the safety of the mine, and

There is NO PROVEN NEED. Michigan's Capacity Assurance Plan, required by the EPA, indicates the region including Michigan has adequate facilities to handle the hazardous waste generated in the region beyond

 Why make disposal EASIER AND CHEAPER when you are trying to encourage reduction? Calling for reduction while at the same time providing more dumping grounds for waste does not give companies an incentive to

grounds for waste does not give companies an incentive to reduce their waste generation. This effects all of us who are exposed to toxics at work and in our communities.

•This salt mine may NOT be WELL
CONSTRUCTED for a hazardous waste facility. Roof falls, pillar robbings, water damage, unknown numbers of borings through the surface strate, and the legation of terms. borings through the surface strata, and the location of parts of the mine underneath heavily populated areas makes the potential for a public health or workplace disaster

•Michigan IMPORTS more toxic wastes from other states than it exports. A huge facility like the salt mines would act like a magnet attracting waste from other states like New Jersey, which recently passed legislation making it almost impossible to site hazardous waste landfills in that state.

 Transport and above ground storage of hazardous waste through heavily populated areas puts those populations at risk. The Federal Office of Hazardous Waste Management estimates 4 or 5 ACCIDENTS for

every 10,000 shipments.

•Possible ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION from leaching, or from accidents or spills would imperil area residents and ecosystems.

•AREA RESIDENTS DO NOT WANT THIS

FACILITY under their neighborhoods.

Groups working in coalition to oppose the threat to the salt mines include (this is not an exhaustive list):
Melvindale Environmental Concerns Association, Downriver Citizens for a Safe Environment, the Environmental Relations Committee, the Evergreen

To tell JCAR (Joint Committee on Administrative Rules) members you are opposed to hazardous waste storage in the salt mines, write to:

JCAR Senate members: Fred Dillingham, John Schwarz, David Honigman, Don Kovisto, Michael J. O'Brien

Michigan Senate State Capitol Building Lansing, MI 48909

JCAR House members: Micheal Griffin, Burton Leland, Sal Rocca, Tom Powers, Gary Randall

Representative
Michigan House of Representatives State Capitol Building Lansing, MI 48909

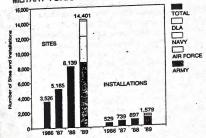
TURNING THE WASTES OF WAR INTO A WAR ON

WASTE: Towards a New Era of Environmental Security

Editor's note: On January 16, the United States and those allied with it went to war against Iraq. Several reports were released prior to the declaration of war warning of the possibly devastating environmental consequences of a sustained conflict. The following article, excerpted from the National Toxics Campaign's newsletter, Toxic Times, details another long term cost of war: that of maintaining a massive military readiness in our backyards.

If a foreign government invaded the United States and dumped toxic chemicals in a thousand communities nationwide, we would probably go to war against them for destroying our nation's defenses. But what do we do when it's our own government that's poisoning our environment?

MILITARY TOXIC WASTE CLEAN-UP SITES



Source: National Toxic Campaign Fund

The Department of Defense, in addition to draining valuable resources from critical social programs, bears major responsibility for environmental destruction in the United States. In over 1,500 communities nationwide, the DOD and its military contractors have created more than 14,400 toxic waste sites, including 96 bases on or proposed for the "Superfund" National Priorities List.

The Pentagon is one of the largest generators of hazardous waste in the United States, if not the world, producing up to 1.5 billion pounds annually. In the production, testing and use of chemical weapons, explosives and rocket fuels, as well as nuclear weapons and nuclear engines, the military generates toxic wastes that are as deadly as they are unique. Virtually every military base works with hazardous materials and generates toxic wastes, and virtually every military base is contaminated with toxic chemicals.

The military is also a major purchaser and user of toxic chemicals. In fact, the DOD has several areas where its specifications require the use of a toxic chemical even where safe substitutes exist or research shows that use of the chemical poses severe environmental threats. For example, the SOS and its contractors were responsible for half of the CFC 113 market in 1986 (150 million pounds), a chemical that is responsible for destroying the Earth's protective ozone layer.

Until recently, federal facilities, often exempt from the enforcement powers of environmental regulators, never even considered responsible toxic material and waste handling practices. By the time neighboring communities had discovered that their homes were built on toxic trash or their water supplies contained cancer-causing poisons, irreversible damage had already been done.

What's worse, the SOS has kept secret the exact extent of this environmental damage in the name of national security. Although we have decided as a society that citizens have a right to know if private industry is poisoning our communities and our environment, we have not held our own government to those same standards.

Michigan's Toxic Military Sites

A partial list of military sites on the State's 307 list inloude: Selfridge AFB, Phelps ANG, Sawyer AFB, Kincheloe AFB, Wurtsmith AFB, US Coast Guard Station, Camp Grayling

The economic and social costs of the military's environmental wreckage are still unknown. Three years ago the EPA estimated that cleanup at DOD facilities would cost between \$20-40 billion. But as the DOD finds thousands of new toxic sites each year, the costs continue to escalate. In addition, no one has ever calculated the social and health costs of the military's environmental problems. Sadly, the Environmental Restoration Program, the largest Defense Department environmental program makes up only two thousandths (or 0.2%) of the annual

military budget.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that Congress has ordered the closing of 65 bases, with the likelihood of more bases to follow. In order to redevelop these bases for civilian use, they will need to be cleaned up first, if they can be cleaned up.

Until now most local organizing against military toxics has been scattered, while citizens confronting pollution from the local base or military contractor have been isolated. Now it is time for citizens activists to jointly develop a strategy to take on the wastes of war and organize for environmental

Security. The NATIONAL TOXICS CAMPAIGN FUND is building a nationwide network of activists confronting military pollution in their communities. The MILITARY TOXICS PROJECT (2802 East Madison, Suite 177, Seattle, WA 98112) is producing a report that provides a comprehensive picture of the military's environmental problems on bases nationwide. A regular newsletter, TOUCHING BASES, is also planned.

Michigan contacts for the Military Toxics Project network Citizens Against Chemica Contamination (Lake, MI) and Lind Caswell, AuSable Conservation Trus (Caswell, AuSable Conservation Trus

(Grayling MI)





· ACTIVISTS AROUND THE STATE

Activists are encouraged to submit an update on their groups events and successes to: Editor, Michigan Toxics Watch, 417 Detroit Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48104.

GRAYLING (

THE WEST POST

AuSable Conservation Trust, featured in the last issue of MTW, scored a long-sought victory when the Air Quality Division finally responded to numerous odor complaints from area residents by citing Weyerhauser with a violation of the Air Pollution Control Commission Rule 901 "a person shall not cause or permit the emission of an air contaminant... in quantities that cause ... unreasonable interference with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property." The company is now required to remediate and monitor the facility.

FREELAND

Residents of Freeland, home of the CSX Residents of Freeland, home of the CSX trainwreck and tonic spill, are hoping to stop the delisting of hazardous soil contaminated from the accident. The soil has been traveling ground without a home as activists have been successful in alerting potential host communities to the real contents of the load. Freeland area activists are encouraging groups to contact DNR Director Hales and or Engler to stop the deregulation.

MUSKEGON •

Muskegon environmental groups scored an important victory when Diana
Anderson, local activist and member of Citizens United for the Environment was appointed to the Muskegon County Local Emergency Planning Commission- a group which is dominated by industry groups. Diana's appointment will give citizens at least one voice in the county on hazardous materials issues.

ANN ARBOR

A senior housing group succe A senior nousing group successfully stopped a pesticide spraying in their apartment complex through an impress community organizing and educational effort. Two area city council people, themselves chemically sensitive, dame their aid. Less toxic IPM (Integrated Pest Management) practices will be instituted in their housing unit.





AUBURN HILLS

Residents Against Incinerators and Landfills, HOPE, CAP, Evergreen Alliance and other anti-incinerator groups have formed a strong coalition to defeat proposed incinerators in southeastern Michigan. A funeral march in Madison Heights drew attention to the dangers of incineration. Area groups also recently organized a debate between Paul Connett, incinerator expert, and the county commissioners. The commissioners declined to debate, however several stood with the crowdoof 600 concerned residents as Mr. Connett spoke about the dangers of incineration.

The group was also one of a number of grassroots toxics groups that ran candidates in the most recent election. Several of the coalition's candidates for county commissioner were narrowly defeated, but important issues were raised as a result of their candidacy.

MELVINDALE AND

SOUTHWEST DETROIT Regulatory changes proposed by the DNR may prevent Crystal Salt Mines President and trash mogul Walter Tomyn from resurrecting his plan to build a hazardous waste disposal facility in the salt mines of Detroit. Area groups are organizing to fight any attempts to use the salt mines for disposal, or to weaken regulations regarding salt mine use. Concerns about increasing the disposal capacity in Michigan without proven need, integrity of the mine, transport of hazardous chemicals and past poor performance of similar facilities are some of the issues. Groups working in coalition against the plan include MECA, DCSE, Evergreen Alliance, ERC (see page 8 MTW).

WALPOLE ISLAND **ONTARIO**

Residents of the Indian Reserve on Walpole Island are trying to call attention to the contamination sites upstream which are poisoning their drinking water (their water treatment facility is primitive and inadequate to handle the frequent spills from plants like Dow Chemical upriver) and making their fish dangerous to eat. Activists on the Reserve are pressing the Canadian Government and the responsible polluters to insure a safe water supply for residents, and to adequately warn people of the risks of eating fish or drinking contaminated water.

1991 Calendar

Resources

What's Happening in Lansing?

February

• February 6, 7, 11, 19. **Public Comment Period** for Michigan's Draft Hazardous Waste Plan

February 6- Marquette 5:00-7:00 pm Dept of Natural Resources Marquette District Office 1990 US 41 South Marquette, MI 49855 February 7- Gaylord 5:00-7:00 pm Dept of Natural Resources Gaylord District Office 1732 West M-32 Gaylord, MI 49735 February 11-Livonia 4:30-7:00 pm Dept of Natural Resources SE Michigan Field Office (Technicolor Education Center) 38980 Seven Mile Road Livonia, MI 48152 February19 - Grand Rapids 4:30-7:00 pm Dept of Natural Resources Grand Rapids District Office State Office Building First Floor Michigan Rm (use Ionia Street entrance) 350 Ottawa Avenue, NW Grand Rapids, MI-49503

Written comments on the draft will be accepted until February 22.

February 9: Ypsilanti Area Right to Act Coalition-UAW Local 735 10:00am-12:00 noon.

To follow up on the December 8 conference on the Right to Act and Toxics Reduction, group will meet to discuss ways in which labor and environmentalists can work together in the Ypsilanti Arca.

March

 March 2. Great Lakes United Conference: Policing the Great Lakes Lawrence Institute of Technology, Southfield, Michigan. Conference on citizen involvement in enforcement of environmental laws. Sponsored by the Great Lakes Forum, the Ecology Center and many other groups. Call (313)542-4180

April

• April 6: Right to Act Coalition Annual Meeting, Lansing Michigan (Place to be announced). Call Scott Tobey for more info (517) 355-5070

 April 26: Workers Memorial Day

(Events across the state to be announced)

Women Activists: Challenging the Abuse of Power

By Anne Witte Gardland, 1988. Forward by Ralph Nader

Describes nine women's struggles to make change in their community, and along the way their development as experienced community organizers and political strategists. The book offers inspiration, successful models and specific techniques for making social and environmental change.

To order: The Feminist Press New York, NY 10016 \$9.95 in paperback

Chemical Exposures: Low Levels and High Stakes By Nicholas Ashford, PhD, JD and Claudia Miller, MD

Comprehensive book on sensitivity to low-level chemical exposure and hearth effects associated with that exposure. Contains clear explanations of technical material on chemical exposure, extensive bibliography, explores illnesses that have been linked to environmental exposures, includes policy recommendations for federal and state govermenments.

To order: Organization for the Advancement of Environmental Health 3865 E. Delhi Ann Arbor, MI 48103 \$17.00 in hardback

Environmental Politics: Lessons from the Grassroots

Edited by Bob Hall

What are the keys for successful organizing in a conservative state? 'Lessons from the Grassroots' details the stories of North Carolinians organizing for. environmental justice in a hostile environment. From the PCB dump fight in a black community to the story of one woman garnering forces to oppose a highlevel radioactive waste dump, the book describes organizing tactics used around the state.

To order: Institute for Southern Studies

PO Box 531 Durham, NC 27702 \$7.00 in paperback

Manuals

Conference Packet from the Right-to-Act, Toxic Use Reduction Conference held December 8, 1990 By Right to Act Coalition Members

Includes materials on Toxic Use Reduction and Right to Actwhat's happening in other states, what's happening here. Also sections on workplace and community organizing, and forming coalitions between labor and environmental groups. Model regional action plan included.

To order: Right to Act Packet
Toxics Reduction Project Ecology Center of Ann

417 Detroit Street Ann Arbor, MI 48104 \$3.00 unbound.



Newsletters Touching Bases: The Newsletter of the Military

Toxics Network A Project of the National Toxics Campaign Fund

With about 100 bases on the Superfund National Priorities List, and another 1,500 installations identified as contaminated, the Department of Defense is America's largest polluter. Touching Bases is the newsletter of the network of grassroots groups trying to force the military to clean up their act.

> Military Toxics Campaign 2802 East Madison, Suite 177 Seattle, WA 98112 \$25.00 membership/newsletter

The Engler Administration:

With the new administration in office, the state budget is consuming the legislature's attention. Environmental committee work has been put on committee work has been put on hold. The implications of Engler's budget cutting proposals for agencies like the DNR and, MIOSHA, however, are ominous. For more information about the DNR budget, call the Michigan Environmental Council, 6277, 627 6220 (517) 487-9539.

Hazardous Waste Policy Committee:

Public comment on the Committee's draft plan will be held in February. See the feature article on page 3 of this newsletter. For more information on the Committee's schedule call Melissa Luttrell, Office of Waste Reduction Services, (517)373-0606.

Legislative Workgroup on Community Right-to-Know:

Business lobby groups presented a long list of weakening amendments to the workgroup draft at the last meeting. Industry remains intent on preempting local laws and programs having anything to do with hazardous materials. The workgroup's future plans are uncertain. For more information on the workgroup's future meeting schedule or copies of the latest working draft, call Rep. Kesteva's office at (517)373-5062.

Waste Prevention Strategy:

The DNR will be presenting its draft Waste Prevention Strategy to the Natural Resources Commission at its February meeting. Environmental groups made suggestions on the draft strategy, which may be reflected in the final report. The draft strategy contained important recommendations for action to move the DNR, the state, business, and individuals toward a priority on prevention rather than control of the generation of wastes. It remains to be seen whether the DNR and the Engler administration will observe the recommendations of the strategy. Copies of the final report will be available from the Office of Waste Reduction Services, P.O. Box 30004, Lansing, MI 48909.



ECOLOGY CENTER JOINS RANK AND FILE

The Boology Center recently affiliated with the UAW/District 65. This alliance is a significant development for the environmental movement. Unionization will strengthen the Ecology Center's advocacy programs and provide important, direct links with labor organizations.

Cooperation between the two movements is not new. The Ecology Center has worked with many labor groups including the UAW and the Firefighters' Union on the Right To Know Campaign; our pesticide reform efforts involved close working relationships with the United Farm Workers' Union and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee; we have also worked with the local Municipal Employees Union to promote recycling and solid waste measures.

Labor groups have been very supportive of environmental issues. In 1970, the UAW supported the first Earth Day when thousands of members participated in pro-environmental rallies, prompting the birth of the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor.

District 65 was founded in 1933 and had its roots in the dry goods industry. Today, the extraordinarily diverse representation includes environmental, publishing, university, day care and legal workers. Amalgamation with the UAW occurred in 1981.

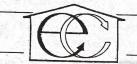
District 65 has been at the forefront of social struggle. Its resources and leadership have been committed to national civil rights, anti-nuclear and anti-apartheid movements. Dr Martin Luther King Jr. said of District 65: "Whenever a battle for decency is waging, you have made yourself a part of it.. There may be bigger unions than you, and bigger treasuries, but there is none whose heart is larger... Indeed you are the conscience of the labor movement."

The Ecology Center is proud to be affiliated with UAW/District 65 and looks forward to stronger cooperation to promote our mutual goals.



The Ecology Center is a non-profit community organization founded in The Center serves as an educational resource and citizens' advocate on a broad array of environmental concerns, including issues such as solid waste reduction and recycling, alternatives to chemical pesticides and household hazardous substances, and community right-to-know. The Center has developed successful educational programs and city-wide services, including groundwater education, waste recycling and energy conservation programs.

For a membership to the Center and a subscription to Ecology Reports, the Center's newsletter, contact the Ecology Center, 417 Detroit Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.



The Ecology Center of Ann Arbor launched the Toxics Reduction Project to empower Michigan citizens in their efforts to reduce toxics pollution and prevent catastrophic accidents in their communities. The Project provides citizens and workers direct technical assistance in exploring toxics reduction strategies, model approaches for local emergency planning, and guidance in interpretation and use of toxics emissions data. The project also works on model state and local policies that further toxics reduction and chemical accident prevention.



SUBSCRIBE!

MICHIGAN TOXICS WATCH



1YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE MICHIGAN TOXICS WATCH \$5.00/YEAR

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PLEASE INCLUDE ME AS AN ACTIVIST IN YOUR TOXICS ACTIVISTS NETWORK \$5.00/YEAR____

(TOXICS ACTIVISTS RECEIVE SPECIAL MAILINGS ABOUT ISSUES, PENDING LEGISLATION, COMMUNITY ACTION, ETC.)

PLEASE SEND ME INFORMATION ABOUT PRESENTING MY LOCAL POLLUTING INDUSTRY WITH A GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENT_

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MICHIGAN TOXICS WATCH

Toxics Reduction Project Ecology Center of Ann Arbor 417 Detroit Street Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Address Correction Requested