

Quotes From Dioxin-Impacted Communities

"In Connecticut, our two largest and poorest cities, Hartford and Bridgeport, have the fifth and eleventh largest trash incinerators in the U.S. More than 300 trucks per day from over 80 suburban towns bring their garbage to these two cities to incinerate. We believe that our residents suffer from high rates of asthma, allergies, cancer, endometriosis, and diabetes from these facilities. We must remove dioxins and other toxins from the waste stream," said **Mark Mitchell, President of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice.**

"People are sick and dying in our community because of the high levels of dioxins found in our blood," said **Mr. Edgar Mouton of Mossville Environmental Action Now.**

"Dow's dioxin is a major and significant public health threat and environmental black eye for Michigan's largest watershed. Failure to release the dioxin reassessment has been instrumental in allowing Dow to manufacture uncertainty about the toxicity of dioxin and manipulate the science of dioxin. Failure to release the dioxin reassessment has allowed the polluter to prevail as the authority on dioxin--- delaying public health protection and a timely cleanup. The next generation of children are growing up on this contaminated floodplain. Enough already," said **Michelle Hurd Riddick of the Lone Tree Council.**

"As Arctic Indigenous Peoples we are living in the frontlines of a toxic chemical assault. Dioxin is found in our traditional foods, our breast milk and our children. The United States has a Government-to-Government legal trust responsibility to the Federally Recognized Tribes and the EPA must stop the delay of getting this important information out. This information could be used to protect the health and environment of Indigenous Peoples. Why would the EPA want to delay protecting the health of our children and our Peoples?," said **Shawna Larson from the Chickaloon Tribe in Alaska.**

"The Learning Disabilities Association of America, with affiliates in 43 states advocating for children and adults with learning disabilities, joins the call for EPA to take long-overdue action on dioxin. Dioxin poses a major threat to healthy fetal development, and can particularly interfere with thyroid hormones, which are essential to healthy brain development. Scientific studies have linked low levels of dioxin to lasting immune system and neurodevelopmental effects such as learning deficits and lowered IQ scores. Moreover, this highly toxic chemical persists for an extraordinarily long time in the environment," said **Maureen Swanson of the Learning Disabilities Association of America.**

"The Ironbound community is the home of the Diamond Alkali Superfund site, one of the largest sites of dioxin contamination in the world, the place where Agent Orange was produced for many decades. Dioxin has poisoned our Passaic River and contaminated our land and our air also through the incinerator in our backyard," said **Ana Baptista of the Ironbound Community Corporation.**

"California has many dioxin sources, despite years of community activity to stop the construction and re-licensing of dioxin-spewing industrial activities such as incinerators, chemical manufacturing plants, cement plants, and refineries. Communities have a right to know the truth about the toxicity of dioxin," said **Jane Williams, Executive Director of California Communities Against Toxics.**

"With sources of dioxin present throughout our already over burdened community, we believe it is very important to consistently reevaluate the risk associated with exposures to these persistent organic pollutants. With elevated cancer risk, developmental delays and chronic disease characterizing our

community it is important that we take a holistic approach to identifying and evaluating sources of exposure. We cannot stand and watch our community be impacted by the by-products of our unsustainable lifestyle linked to the sources of dioxin in US air. We host a cement kiln, sewage treatment plants, many hospitals with waste incinerators and municipal waste facilities. The time has come for science to meet activism and work for the greater good," said **Ogonnaya Dotson-Newman of WE ACT for Environmental Justice, Inc. (WE ACT)**.

"Agent Orange/Dioxin contamination still continues to effect Vietnam Veterans from the contamination in the Passaic River and other hot spots within New Jersey," said **Michael Eckstein of New Jersey State Council, Vietnam Veterans of America**.

"We have one of, if not the largest, sites of dioxin contamination in our rivers. Over 50 miles of our waterways are contaminated with dioxin as a result of the Dow Chemical Company. We have a very strong interest in the release of this report, and hope it will counter Dow's misinformation about dioxin," said **Terry Miller of Lone Tree Council**.

"Many pulp and paper mills in Maine are still heavily dependent on chlorine dioxide to delignify and bleach their pulp. This makes such mills less competitive when compared to mills that use oxygen delignification and ozone bleaching, and Mainers still have to limit their consumption of fish from rivers where these mills discharge waste due in part to dioxin contamination," said **Nick Bennett, Staff Scientist of Natural Resources Council of Maine**.

"AAIDD's Environmental Health Initiative firmly believes that all people have the right to live, work, play and pray in a safe and healthy environment. AAIDD is especially concerned about chemicals in the environment that are linked with adverse health outcomes such as learning and developmental disabilities. Endocrine disrupting chemicals like dioxin pose a serious threat for both the developing brain and for those already living with disabilities. Precaution should be taken in our communities to protect our most vulnerable populations, such as children and those living with a learning or developmental disability. Regulating harmful chemicals like dioxin is a necessary step in protecting these populations," said **Laura Abulafia of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (Formerly AAMR)**.

"We have a superfund site in the middle of our largest city, Portland, Oregon, that is contaminated with dioxin among other things. This report has been more than 15 years in the making," said **Jane Harris, Executive Director of the Oregon Center for Environmental Health**.

"I live on the Tittabawassee River about 12 miles downstream from the Dow Chemical plant and World HQ in Midland MI. It has been 8+ years now since the revelation of the high concentration of dioxin, furans and a host of other highly toxic compounds was made public. 8 years of political corruption at all levels of government, by both major parties and all agencies involved. 8 more years of declining health for my entire family. 8 years of mostly inaction by both agencies, the EPA and the MDEQ to actively start a cleanup process. 8 years of ALL residents in harms way being placed on ignore. The cleanup of an area of this magnitude, two rivers totaling 50+ miles, countless thousands of acres of flood plain and the entire Saginaw Bay is simply mind boggling. The length of the river alone dictates decades of clean-up. Yet, with this knowledge in mind, the EPA continues to barter with Dow and our Governor while considering us a sacrificial lambs," said **John Taylor of Saginaw, MI**.

"Our community, Rochester, New York has been impacted by the release of dioxin by the Eastman Kodak Company. We have extremely high rates of certain cancers which we believe could have been caused by this most toxic of chemicals," said **Judy Braiman of Rochesterians Against Misuse of Pesticides**.

"Glynn County, Georgia, is contaminated by dioxin from wood preserving, chemical manufacturing, pulp mill, and chlorine production. For 20 years, the delayed assessment has contributed to keeping our community from being cleaned up and our citizens' health protected. Release the Dioxin Reassessment now," said **Bill Owens, President of Glynn Environmental Coalition**.

"The Merrimack Valley communities have survived the Industrial Revolution only to be burdened with a dioxin legacy from trash and sludge incineration, help us move to a more sustainable future by addressing the persistent pollution we have experienced," said **Brent Baeslack of the Haverhill Environmental League**.

"EPA must protect our human right to health and immediately establish strict dioxin policies that will protect the health of all communities throughout America," said **Monique Harden of Advocates for Environmental Human Rights**.

"Dioxins are known breast carcinogens and endocrine disruptors. They can be detected in every human being, including newborns. It's time to stop studying dioxins and to start taking action," said **Jeanne Rizzo of the Breast Cancer Fund**.

"Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and ice cream contain high levels of dioxins. One way dioxins get into dairy products is through milk from dairy cows that are legally permitted to graze on pastures that have been treated with municipal sewage sludges and other industrial wastes. These contaminated soil amendments can legally contain high levels of dioxins and dioxin-like compounds that are excreted through lactation," said **Caroline Snyder of Citizens for Sludge Free Land**.

"We live on the coast of Texas. We are deeply concerned that people living here aren't being protected with the information they need to keep their families safe," said **Tamara Maschino of Clean Air Clean Lake**.

"The cleanup site in Pt Angeles WA is a dioxin laden area -- soils, sediments, marine animals -- from a pulp mill that bleached their pulp. It is a CERCLA site. Also, two of their landfills in neighborhoods are CERCLA listed due to the off site dioxin levels in soils and stream sediments. We have high levels of childhood cancer for a relatively small community. The Strait of Juan de Fuca is cultural, subsistence and commercial fishing grounds for the Lower Elwha Tribe, now dioxin laden along with many other industrial contaminants. People also recreate in these waters, although the State should make it off limits. Eighty five properties, mostly residential, have just been tested for dioxin. About all contained dioxin; 45 sites at 11.1 ppt and higher, but any amount is too much. These must be cleaned up to levels protective of human health and the environment," said **Darlene Schanfald of the Olympic Environmental Council**.

"Scientific evidence shows us that 50 to 70 percent of breast cancer incidence cannot be explained by genetics or personal behaviors and that involuntary environmental exposures to carcinogens play a large role in perpetrating the breast cancer epidemic. Dioxin is one of the most dangerous known

carcinogens. BCA urges our environmental agencies to skip convoluted regulatory processes because our people's health cannot be put on hold any longer,” said **Joyce Bichler of Breast Cancer Action**.

“Every moment that further cleanup of dioxin is delayed, more people are endangered,” said **Vivian Stockman of Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**.

“Vietnam veterans and Vietnamese-Americans, and their children and grandchildren suffer from diseases and disabilities as a result of their exposure to dioxin laden Agent Orange. More than three million people in Vietnam, sprayed with Agent Orange during the Vietnam War and now living in toxic dioxin “hot spots,” endure an ongoing public health crisis. The American Public Health Association recognized the urgency of this crisis and called for assistance for all those affected and for cleanup of the “hot spots.” Veterans and others who are suffering deserve no less!,” said **Merle Ratner of the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign**.

“We are very concerned about government making it legal to release powerful, long-lasting man-made poisons and carcinogens into the environment especially with no knowledge about their health effects or of the synergistic effects of multiple, routine exposures to pollutants such as dioxin and radioactivity,” said **Diane D’Arrigo of Nuclear Information and Resource Service**.

“I was exposed to Dioxin through climbing poles in 1982 at which time I was pregnant with my first child. That child that is now 28 has life long learning difficulties and will never reach her full genetic potential. I believe this was due to my exposure to pentachlorophenol a poll treatment that has a lot of Dioxin in it. The EPA knew in 1982 that lab animals exposed to low levels of Dioxin showed neurological damage the same kind of damage I see in my daughter. I am mad as hell that I was exposed and my child was harmed. Stop the madness and release the report,” said **Eden Brightspirit Hendrix of People for Environmental Action & Community Health**.

“Protect All Children's Environment is a national support organization for individuals injured and or disabled by chemicals, mostly pesticides. All of these injuries were unnecessary and due to the governments failure to protect us from chemicals. Dioxin is yet another dangerous substance that continues to cause harm due to lack of precaution and failure to protect the people. This is due to greed and politics which is clearly shown by the programs that are offered by the EPA and states that educate corporate poison pushers in how to avoid fines and regulation, while offering little or no information to citizens in how to detect poisons and their effects and even less information to physicians on how to diagnose or treat chemical injury. This process amounts to decades of growing government and corporate conspiracy and treason against American citizens resulting in blatant premeditated random homicide,” said **Elizabeth O’Nan of Protect All Children’s Environment**.

“Because release of the Dioxin Reassessment has been delayed, our community has been assaulted with dioxin emissions for 22 years from a Wheelabrator waste incinerator. If the Dioxin Reassessment is released, communities like ours will have a powerful tool to convince regulators that waste incineration is a dangerous and unnecessary threat to public health and the environment,” said **Jackie Elliott of CLEAR**.

“We have waited far too long in North Carolina for the EPA to act. Waste incinerators still operate 24 hours a day and new waste to energy plants are on the horizon. EPA must act now to reduce the threat of dioxin exposure,” said David Mickey of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

"The presence of copper can be a concern in biomass power plants that burn waste pallets, four of which are proposed in Western Massachusetts at present. Copper-based fungicides are the most common chemicals used to control mold growth on pallets, and copper is a catalyst in dioxin formation. Dioxins are the second most lethal substances known to scientists after radioactive isotopes. Periodic stack testing does not accurately reflect real dioxin levels, so continuous monitoring for dioxins is the right approach. Any biomass or other type of incinerator must have continuous emissions monitors (CEMS) for dioxins. These continuous monitors have been tested and verified by EPA. Requiring that biomass power plants monitor and disclose their dioxin emissions real-time should not be a problem. Dioxin emissions can be hundreds to thousands of times higher than what annual stack tests indicate," said **Jana Chicoine of Concerned Citizens of Russell**.

"At this point, we are trying to save lives. The last thing we need is a new study. It's time to release the study that was completed many years ago," said **Alonzo Spencer of Save Our County Inc**.

"Dioxin is one of the most serious pollution-related health hazards. It is particularly dangerous because of the potential for insidious damage to unborn infants and future generations impacted by genetic changes. One facility in Delaware, DuPont's Edge Moor titanium dioxide plant, reported Toxic Release Inventory releases of over 60 pounds of dioxin for the year 2000. Dioxin-contaminated wastes from this plant have been used to treat Wilmington and Philadelphia drinking water--and probably that of many other places. This facility, the world's first chloride process titanium dioxide plant, has probably been emitting large amounts of dioxins since the 1950s. Is it any wonder that DuPont, headquartered in Delaware, has been one of the most aggressive polluters stalling meaningful action against dioxins by the EPA and Federal health officials? Is it any wonder that public health statistics in Delaware are so poor? That infant mortality is so high? I am speaking for a community, a state, that urgently needs ACTION to control dioxin emissions. We need action NOW, not a continuation of the unending cycle of further study and review," said **Alan Muller of Green Delaware**.

"Or nation--and world--must address the insidious chemicals we consume, create, landfill, and manufacture every day. Our fundamental ability to reproduce and live is at stake. A vital initial step is to acknowledge the pervasive pollution which plagues our bodies and environment. Release this study," said **Bruce Wood of BURNT**.

"There are many dioxin sites closed but may still pose a risk due to encroachment of homes. Many other sites have shallow PCBs and outlawed chemicals such as Lindane, TCE, DDT, etc. As was shown with Agent Orange, when polychlorinated chemicals combine with benzene, at high temperature and at some rate these mixtures of PCBs create an unintended perfect storm for Dioxin creation. Dioxin is a bad actor and many people getting exposed to dioxin will contract a cancer 10 or more years later. The knowledge and control of dioxin and limiting exposures will likely reduce cancer rates, and could have a significant impact on Health Care costs. Just the costs saved by cancer would help the economy – just as cutting back on cigarettes dramatically reduced Lung cancer rates in the years following tobacco reforms. Many friends have endometriosis and cancer. My parents said they knew of no-one who had cancer in their 20s-40s. Now sadly there are many Dioxin related health problems occurring at younger ages," said **John Caulfield**.

"Cement plants in our community create dioxin as they burn hazardous waste. There's not enough of an awareness of dioxin emissions because people are focusing on lead and other pollutants. We would be happy to see some attention and emphasis given to dioxin," said **Becky Bornhorst of Downwinders at Risk**.

“It has now been 14 years since the closure of the largest known source of dioxin in the country, the Columbus, Ohio trash burning power plant. And for 14 years we have waited for the release of the dioxin assessment. No more studies, the assessment has been held captive long enough,” said **Teresa Mills of the Buckeye Environmental Network.**

It is bad enough to be tied to the archaic notion that burning waste is the answer, but we don’t even do that in the safest ways possible, with the benefit of modern scrubber technology. Whether burning garbage, coal, tires, dioxin is one of the byproducts. There is no safe level of dioxin. It is unconscionable that the American public continues to be subjected to one of the deadliest carcinogens known to man. My community, as many others, is a hot spot for pollution, no matter which direction the wind blows. This is unfair. Current laws must be enforced and new legislation that is truly protective of this and future generations must be enacted. The lobbyist stranglehold must be broken, with conservation and renewable solutions as the only things to emerge from the ashes,” said **Maureen Headington of Stand Up/Save Lives Campaign.**

"As a women's environmental health group Women's Voices for the Earth aims to reduce and ultimately eliminate environmental pollutants that impact women's health and their families and communities. Dioxin has long been of concern to us, given the research linking exposure to endometriosis, breast cancer and other types of reproductive harm in women. Delaying the release of the dioxin assessment means a delay in actions which will help prevent these health conditions in women across the country. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer,” said **Alexandra Scranton of Women’s Voices for the Earth.**