

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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## GROUP CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT STUDY OF AIR POLLUTION AT SRS CALLS FOR ACTION TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

Today the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League called for a comprehensive investigation of toxic air pollution from the Savannah River Site. In a letter to the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the group criticized the conclusions of a recent public health assessment by the federal agency. The League pointed to its own tests which reveal ongoing risks to public health from a variety of toxic emissions to the air over SRS.

Based on its analysis, the League concluded, "The ATSDR's public health assessment falls short of an acceptable analysis of offsite health impacts from the pollutants analyzed. We recommend that the ATSDR use the means at its disposal to either conduct its own analysis and produce conclusive results or require the US Department of Energy to do what should have been done decades ago; i.e., determine the public health impact of air polluting radioactive and toxic air pollutants on public health in the Central Savannah River Area."

"The ATSDR's study is contradictory and inconclusive," said Rev. Charles Utley, EJ Campaign Coordinator for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. Rev. Utley, who did field investigations around SRS, continued, "Our report, entitled *Sow the Wind*, indicates that operations at SRS have had and will continue to have a negative impact on the health of residents in the Central Savannah River Area." The League's own investigations centered on the air toxics emitted from hundreds of large and small smokestacks at SRS and how they interact to raise downwind pollution levels in Jackson, New Ellenton, Williston and other communities.

Questioning ATSDR's failure, Louis Zeller, the League's director, said, "The amount of airborne radioactive pollution from SRS is massive. It is greater than the

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liquid releases to streams and groundwater by at least an order of magnitude. How could the ATSDR miss this?

Rev. Utley observed, "There is an overarching reason for action: the outline of environmental injustice overshadows SRS. This injustice extends to commercial nuclear plants, uranium mines, fuel enrichment and fabrication plants, and other waste sites. Most of all, this injustice affects families living near radioactive facilities." He concluded, "Government officials must take into account this pernicious, unwanted legacy whenever nuclear contamination and public health issues are concerned."

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The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League's August 12 letter to ATSDR is available at [http://www.bredl.org/pdf4/130812\\_BREDL\\_comments\\_on\\_ATSDR\\_SRS\\_health\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.bredl.org/pdf4/130812_BREDL_comments_on_ATSDR_SRS_health_assessment.pdf)

The League's research report *Sow the Wind—Toxic Air Pollution from the Savannah River Site* is available at [http://www.bredl.org/pdf2/SOW\\_THE\\_WIND\\_2008.pdf](http://www.bredl.org/pdf2/SOW_THE_WIND_2008.pdf)