

CSWAB

Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
E12629 Weigand's Bay South - Merrimac, WI 53561
Phone (608) 643-3124 - Fax (608) 643-0005
Email: info@cswab.org - Website: www.cswab.org

August 8, 2007

U.S. Senator Russ Feingold
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

RE: Support for "TCE Reduction Act" (S.1911)

Dear Russ:

Thousands of Wisconsin's wells have been sampled for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Of the 59 different VOCs detected, trichloroethylene is the one found most often in Wisconsin's groundwater.¹

Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a degreasing agent in metal cleaning that has been used widely in Department of Defense (DOD) industrial and maintenance processes.² Elevated levels of TCE have been detected in groundwater at Badger Army Ammunition Plant very near the Bluffview neighborhood. From September 2002 to December 2005, levels rose from 0.7 parts per billion to 25 parts per billion (ppb), far exceeding the safe drinking water standard of only 5 ppb. Toxic levels of TCE have also been detected at hazardous waste disposal sites at Badger including the Propellant Burning Grounds, the source of a contaminant plume that has migrated several miles offsite to the Wisconsin River, polluting drinking water wells in its path.

Exposure to low levels of TCE may cause headaches and difficulty concentrating. High-level exposure may cause dizziness, headaches, nausea, unconsciousness, cancer, and possibly death. As a consequence of health risks from ingestion, EPA adopted a TCE drinking water standard that became effective in 1989. However, health concerns over TCE have been further amplified in recent years as scientific studies have suggested additional risks posed by human exposure to TCE.³

Despite the consensus among the scientific community that new TCE standards need to be set in order to protect our health, EPA has failed to act or set a timeline. According to its website, EPA does not plan to release a revised standard until the end of 2010.

At greatest risks are infants and children who are especially vulnerable to these environmental toxins. Their bodies take in proportionately greater amounts of environmental toxins than adults, their rapid development makes them more vulnerable to environmental interference, and their normal behavior patterns place them at greater risk to some toxins. The proposed legislation seeks to address risks to these and other susceptible sub-populations.

Senators Clinton, Kerry, Boxer, and Lautenberg recently introduced the "TCE Reduction Act" (S.1911) directing the Environmental Protection Agency to set revised standards for TCE in a timely manner.

We are writing to urge you to support this bill and ensure its passage for the health and well being of community and tribal members living near the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, as well as the many other Wisconsin communities affected by TCE contamination.

Thank you for your continued vigilance and advocacy for the environmental health of communities threatened by TCE and other pervasive military toxins.

Sincerely,

Laura Olah, Executive Director

¹ Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council, Report to the Legislature, page iii, August 29, 2006.

² United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Environmental Contamination: Department of Defense Activities Related to Trichloroethylene, Perchlorate, and Other Emerging Contaminants*, July 12, 2007.

³ Ibid.

CSWAB

Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
E12629 Weigand's Bay South - Merrimac, WI 53561
Phone (608) 643-3124 - Fax (608) 643-0005
Email: info@cswab.org - Website: www.cswab.org

August 8, 2007

U.S. Senator Herb Kohl
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

RE: Support for "TCE Reduction Act" (S.1911)

Dear Senator Kohl:

Thousands of Wisconsin's wells have been sampled for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Of the 59 different VOCs detected, trichloroethylene is the one found most often in Wisconsin's groundwater.⁴

Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a degreasing agent in metal cleaning that has been used widely in Department of Defense (DOD) industrial and maintenance processes.⁵ Elevated levels of TCE have been detected in groundwater at Badger Army Ammunition Plant very near the Bluffview neighborhood. From September 2002 to December 2005, levels rose from 0.7 parts per billion to 25 parts per billion (ppb), far exceeding the safe drinking water standard of only 5 ppb. Toxic levels of TCE have also been detected at hazardous waste disposal sites at Badger including the Propellant Burning Grounds, the source of a contaminant plume that has migrated several miles offsite to the Wisconsin River, polluting drinking water wells in its path.

Exposure to low levels of TCE may cause headaches and difficulty concentrating. High-level exposure may cause dizziness, headaches, nausea, unconsciousness, cancer, and possibly death. As a consequence of health risks from ingestion, EPA adopted a TCE drinking water standard that became effective in 1989. However, health concerns over TCE have been further amplified in recent years as scientific studies have suggested additional risks posed by human exposure to TCE.⁶

Despite the consensus among the scientific community that new TCE standards need to be set in order to protect our health, EPA has failed to act or set a timeline. According to its website, EPA does not plan to release a revised standard until the end of 2010.

At greatest risks are infants and children who are especially vulnerable to these environmental toxins. Their bodies take in proportionately greater amounts of environmental toxins than adults, their rapid development makes them more vulnerable to environmental interference, and their normal behavior patterns place them at greater risk to some toxins. The proposed legislation seeks to address risks to these and other susceptible sub-populations.

Senators Clinton, Kerry, Boxer, and Lautenberg recently introduced the "TCE Reduction Act" (S.1911) directing the Environmental Protection Agency to set revised standards for TCE in a timely manner.

We are writing to urge you to support this bill and ensure its passage for the health and well being of community and tribal members living near the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, as well as the many other Wisconsin communities affected by TCE contamination.

Thank you for your continued vigilance and advocacy for the environmental health of communities threatened by TCE and other pervasive military toxins.

Sincerely,

Laura Olah, Executive Director

⁴ Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council, Report to the Legislature, page iii, August 29, 2006.

⁵ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Environmental Contamination: Department of Defense Activities Related to Trichloroethylene, Perchlorate, and Other Emerging Contaminants*, July 12, 2007.

⁶ Ibid.