

## **Clean Air Coalition calls on DuPont to limit emissions**

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With public comment on renewal of the air permit for DuPont's Town of Tonawanda plant ending, a local environmental group is stepping up its call for the company to lower its pollution levels. Specifically, members of the Clean Air Coalition said they object that DuPont apparently requested and was granted a variance on eight different vents that emit toxic chemicals over EPA regulations.

"There are simple solutions that would reduce emissions at DuPont," said Rebecca Newberry of the Tonawanda-based Clean Air Coalition. "But DuPont is refusing to invest in this technology. This is unacceptable." The group last week launched a social media campaign called "#DoMoreDuPont" featuring photos of residents holding up sheets of paper with that hashtag.

DuPont's next Title V permit, which sets the rules for how much the plant can pollute, has been under review by state and federal enforcement agencies over the last year and the deadline for public comment to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is Monday. "The Yerkes site is committed to meeting its regulatory requirements and operating at the highest standards of environmental protection," Yerkes Plant Manager Warren C. Hoy said. "The site continues to make substantial investments to reduce its environmental footprint."

The River Road plant ranked third on the 2013 list of Erie County's biggest polluters, behind the Huntley electric generating station and 3M, according to the EPA's most recent Toxics Release Inventory. The plant released about 238,000 pounds of toxic byproducts, including the chemicals methyl methacrylate and vinyl fluoride on its site and about 2,200 pounds of zinc compounds that were transferred off site, the EPA reported. The plant manufactures Corian and Tedlar countertops.

However, company officials credited their "Drive to Zero" initiative with eliminating over 81 million pounds of waste that would have been sent to landfills. "We have made progress in reducing our environmental footprint, and continue to place a priority on eliminating site emissions and waste," Hoy said in the statement. But environmental advocates and elected officials point to a history of violations at the plant. A contract welder was killed in 2010 in an explosion at the plant.

The company agreed last year to pay \$440,000 in fines under a federal settlement for violations of the Clean Air Act. "This is about protecting the health and well-being of Western New Yorkers," said Germain Harnden from the Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health. "This facility has a history of noncompliance. This technology is important so that the community outside the plant and workers inside the plant are protected from toxic emissions."

State Sen. Marc Panepinto and City of Tonawanda Mayor Rick Davis submitted letters dated last week to the EPA requesting that the agency object to the permit renewal and require DuPont to work with the state Department of Environmental Conservation "to install the appropriate technology at this facility to reduce emissions." And Erie County Legislator Kevin R. Hardwick asked the EPA to "make certain that everything that can be done to protect the people of Grand Island and the Tonawandas from adverse levels of air pollution is indeed done."