

Georgia-Gulf neighbors file \$19 million in suits

Some 19 suits by residents living near the Georgia-Gulf Corp. plant south of Plaquemine have been filed against the plant for \$19 million in damages from alleged injury due to chemical emissions.

The 19 suits each seek \$1 million in damages. They were filed by the following residents: Albertha Dickerson; Alice Wilson, Marcus and Libra Wilson and Thomas Wilson; Dianne Georgetown, Roy Stewart, Robert Georgetown and Randolph Bridgewater; Alisa Mitchell, Latoya and Mario Mitchell, Keith and Wayne Mitchell and Kristine Pernel; Stacey Evans, Della Riley, Brenda Jenkins and Jessie Jenkins; Avis Wilson, and Leonard Breaux and Quintin Wilson.

Other plaintiffs are Laverne Wilson, Laketha Anderson, Emelia Riley and Emile Riley; Barbara Adams, Katina, James and Carl Adams, Elnora Jordan and Waller Riley; Louvenia Mitchell, Theresa Mitchell and Sebastian Littles; Sarah Williams, Dedra, Hagga and Maryuliet Johnson, Azizi, Harvard and Jonathan Humphrey, Clarence Williams and Vincent Johnson; Ollie Mae Dickerson, Kendrick and Lakesha Dickerson and Samuel Spriggs; Robert and Lois Ruffins, Melissa, Yolanda, Wanda and Robert Ruffins and Louis Ruffins;

Royal Mitchell Jr. and Sandra Mitchell and Darius Smith; Anna Howard; Daniel Ennis Jr.; James Barnes and Ethel Walker; Iona Riley; Terry Johnson and Earnestine Wilson.

Listed as defendants in all of the suits are Georgia Gulf, Georgia Pacific Corp. and Georgia Pacific

Chemicals Inc., the former owner of the plant; Vincent J. Tretter, environmental manager of the plant; Edwin A. Schiffer, general manager of the PVC section of the plant; and Edward A. Schmitt, production manager of the VCM section of the plant.

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SUITS

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The suits, each some 20 pages long, claim that the plant has emitted "substantial quantities" of acetone, phenol, methanol, ammonia, caustic, chlorine, ethylene dichloride, vinyl chloride monomer, polyvinyl chloride and sodium chloride since it began operations in the mid 1970s. The chemicals, especially because of chemical interactions, are "carcinogenic, mutagenic, teratogenic or cause other toxic or harmful effects" on the residents, including physical, economical and psychological injury, the suits allege.

The suits list 10 allegations. The first and longest count is that of negligence. The residents claim that they have been "unreasonably exposed to chemicals which cause personal injury, economic harm, illness and which increase the risk of contracting illnesses or interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life."

The suit further states that the emissions have depreciated their land values and their enjoyment of their property, have caused groundwater contamination, and have caused emotional distress and mental anguish due to the risk of cancer from exposure to the chemicals.

cc to: WC Holbrook
Chuck Carter
Mggs.

BOR 007886

The suit lists 35 specific instances in which Georgia Pacific violated federal and state air emissions standards by releasing vinyl chloride into the atmosphere in concentrations in excess of 10 parts per million. These alleged violations occurred between August of 1977 and April of 1983.

It is claimed in the suit that since May of 1983 the plant has continued to discharge vinyl chloride and other contaminants in amounts which violate its environmental permits, but the suit offers no specific instances after May of 1983.

Other charges listed in the suit are: negligence in the conduct of ultrahazardous activity, negligence per se, reckless and wanton misconduct, strict liability, nuisance, trespass, manufacturers' product liability, battery, and intentional infliction of mental and emotional distress and injury.

Attorneys representing the residents are Robert E. Klempeter of Baton Rouge and Allen Kanner of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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