

HILL AND KNOWLTON, INC.

Industry Opponents Plead Case At Chamber Meeting

Opponents of Texas Air Control Board applications for permits for two industries to build facilities east of State Highway 146 in the Bayport District presented their cases to directors of La Porte-Bayshore Chamber of Commerce.

At the Wednesday, Feb. 22, meeting Stennie Madours, representing Galveston Bay Conservation and Preservation Association, and R. A. Wright and Rufus G. Smith of La Porte outlined arguments against the facilities proposed by American Hoechst Corp. and B. F. Goodrich Chemical Co.

"We (residents of the bayshore area) will pay in cost of pollution and loss of the bayfront," Madours said, despite economic advantages for the plants themselves.

Health hazards to residents here would be mitigated if the plants moved west of the highway, she said, citing prevailing winds from the southeast that would blow emissions over industrial areas instead of over residential areas.

She insisted the object of the presentation was not to get the chamber directors to take a position on the matter, but to "communicate our concerns which may or may not be your concerns".

Several toxic substances allegedly to be produced or used in production by the plants were listed by Madours.

The type of pollution, she said, will be like emissions from a nearby plant at which chain link fences around the plant are replaced annually because of corrosion resulting from chlorine emissions.

"I would not risk that kind of pollution. I believe there will be an incremental decline in the community if the industries moves in," she said.

She said her concern was primarily with accidental spills, not normal production procedures.

Madours qualified herself as holding a BS degree in environmental management from the University of Houston at Clear Lake City and having worked on several environmental impact statements and other environmental data collecting.

Wright made his presentation a plea for better land use.

"I make a living from industry," he said "but this area would be better served if we picked the type of industry to go into the last remaining bayfront property."

He cited such industries as Big S, Liquid Air and Graver Tank Manufacturing as best candidates.

The two proposed plants, he said, would be better suited inside the industrial complex west of Hwy. 146. where industrial workers will be prepared to cope with accidental or fugitive emissions better than the "young, the infirm, schools and full time residents."

He congratulated Goodrich for "fantastic controls" to be employed at the plant.

"But I can't understand why they are proposing such elaborate controls when they

could move a short distance west and not have to have them," he said.

Employment figures at his company show a small percentage of workers actually living in La Porte, Wright said, arguing that economic advantages will not be as great as expected for La Porte and tax benefits will go to Pasadena. However, others at the meeting noted other plants have workers who live in La Porte.

He noted the need for recreational facilities and this land as the last undeveloped land on the bay front between Baytown and San Leon for recreation.

Brent Miller, representing Harris County Commissioner Tom Bass, said his office has joined the controversy in

support of the people's right to protest. He said Bass has received a "stack of letters" from opponents of the plants and none in support of the plants.

"We are representing the people. We are not anti-industry," he said. "The problem is whether people have the right of self-determination. Can they object to the plants?"

Smith made a strong pitch for alternate use of a four and a half acre area for top eschelon housing, recreational boating facilities. He cited tourism that would develop business from such facilities.

He distributed information sheets about Marina Del Rey in Los Angeles, Calif., and pleaded for planning here to equal that.

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