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My Personal Opinion and comments

Re: concerning Alkali Lake Toxic waste dump and
proposals between DEQ and Bayer Crop Science :

I have lived in Lake County for the last thirty years and have close friends and acquaintances who have lived near the Alkali Lake toxic waste dump. I have also worked a few miles from the dump for local ranchers over the years but now avoid the area.

A degree of understanding:

I have read or reviewed much of the material at ECSI and a great deal of the earlier reports by DEQ. [Environmental Cleanup Site Information (ECSI) <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ECSI/ecsiquery.aspthen> enter 291]

I know contamination continues by wind and waterborne particles at and around the Alkali Lake site.

I know there are severe contaminated areas outside of the fenced spill site area that DEQ plays down because of "limited contact" or "exposure".

I have observed and heard first-hand continued reports of cancer and birth defects for that immediate area and know innocent people are being exposed to risks and health hazards because of the negligence and abuse at the Alkali Lake waste disposal site.

I have studied the severe and relevant dangers of many of the toxins released at the site.

I consider the entire area to be a severe and dangerous health threat for anyone who comes near that site.

The number of exposures is irrelevant to the morality of the problem.

I feel strongly that those who chose to deposit these toxic poisons placed here in Lake County, did so for the purpose of increasing profits, not from ignorance or mere negligence.

<http://www.restoreallthings.com/alkalilake.php>

History:

Those involved at the time of the dumping at Alkali Lake, Oregon, had sufficient knowledge of the real and present danger in these barrels and made little reasonable attempt to contain that threat.

It is clearly evident by the known history at the disposal site and the manner and conditions under

which the original company brought and left these barrels at Alkali Lake that their intent was to distance themselves from and abandon the problems of proper disposal and their natural, moral, and legal responsibility.

This was at the very least reckless endangerment if not criminal negligence on the part by all who participated in the original dumping of toxins.

Even the manufacturing techniques were clearly designed to make profit, not limit pollutions or provide natural safeguards from damaging the lives and properties of others..

This dumping was a crime.

The crime continues.

Present Proposal:

The present proposal and Consent Judgment that DEQ is attempting to accept concerning the liability presented by the abuse and neglect and mismanagement of these chemicals and this toxic waste site is unacceptable to a moral population whether they are threatened by the toxins or not.

In order for a society to survive and prosper it is essential that it care about its fellow members and neighbors, their welfare and health, as much as they care about their own.

Profit does not fit into that equation.

Years ago DEQ made the mistake of bulldozing the barrels over a hydraulic water flow and source and attempted to cover up the problem with a clay cap.

To accept the presently proposed settlement between DEQ and Bayer is merely another cover up of the problem. The proposed Consent Judgment is a bureaucratic capitulation to the path of least resistance. To ask the people to carry 80% of the estimated cost and Bayer to be exempted of any further responsibility by th remuneration of only 20% is an insult to the victims of this ecological disaster.

The people employed at DEQ are not accepting the burden of clean up. By their acceptance they are merely placing the burden upon the shoulders of the public who are the victims of this crime.

For thousands of years individuals have been held accountable by law for the hazards they create and the damage and injury they cause by those hazards.

“And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them;...” Exodus 21:33

Corporations owe their existence to the authority under which they were incorporated. Rhodia Inc [prior to 1997 Rhone-Poulenc], Chipman Div., Chemical Waste Storage & Disposition,, and now Bayer Crop Science, successor in interest, should bear far more responsibility for the damage done and the cost of a solution to the problem.

If Bayer was truly interested in giving the people of Oregon and the world relief from the headache we have and continue to suffer with at Alkali Lake they would and should show a good faith effort to turn the ecological disaster into and opportunity for restoration and relief.

If they are only interested in profit then it is the obligation of the authority by which they exist to hold them accountable in this issue of life and death.

The lives already damaged by this ecological pit of poisonous toxins abandoned and covered up at Alkali Lake cannot be undone, but Bayer Crop Science could and should invest their extensive research and development funds toward a solution for toxic waste disposal.

The DEQ and all other branches of government exist for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of the people who they were meant to serve. Their responsibility originates with the natural rights of the people more so than the corporate existence of any public or private corporate entity.

Summing up:

Those who chose to create this situation knew its toxicity and the danger being created and were merely trying to avoid the cost of proper disposal at the expense of other innocent people who would come in contact to it for years to come.

My understanding is that those who profited from this deadly fiasco should carry the brunt of the cost. While Bayer Crop Science did not cause the problem they bought the responsibility with the company and its potential for profit.

Bayer and the original individuals responsible and their heirs should accept the greatest burden in the search for a remedy.

I believe:

- DEQ's policy of playing down the problem because it presents only "limited exposure" is aiding and abetting the continuation of that original crime.
- DEQ's policy of accepting the bulk of the estimated cost of questionable "detoxification and clean up" is adding insult to injury by charging the victims with the cost of the crime.
- DEQ's acceptance of a proposal that burdens the victim rather than the profit margin is a continuation and collaboration with the same spirit that created the problem in the beginning.

It is the people and inhabitants of Oregon who will have to pay for the provision and policies of DEQ and Bayer Crop Science. If we do not lose sight of the fact that it is the people to whom the State of Oregon, the DEQ, and even Bayer Crop Science owe their very existence and authority, then it is only just, right, and fair that the all the parties explain their position and proposals to the people's satisfaction before consenting.

I propose:

- That DEQ and Bayer Crop Science have face to face meetings with the population of Oregon, Lake county and the people living in areas immediately around Alkali Lake.
- That DEQ and Bayer Crop Science prepare to speak openly and candidly to the people of Oregon who the State of Oregon and the DEQ are supposed to be serving and protecting.
- That the people, politicians, Bayer Crop Science, and members of the Department of Environmental Quality meet with the sole agenda of doing the right thing.

Concerning Cleanup and solutions:

The solution is not found in merely containment and passive monitoring of the problem, but in a proactive assault to create change and find a solution.

I believe a wider area of containment must be accepted and properly marked.

And I believe that the best way to accomplish cleanup is through research into organic degradation of Trichlorophenols and other compounds, and not in the removal of toxins from the site. This work is already being done by Japanese groups and other researchers including that done by Olga Maltseva and Patrick Oriel.

Such research and development would undoubtedly bear fruit all over the world as third world nations pollute their own environments, and such benefaction on the part of Bayer Crop Science would go a long way to make amends for the failures and negligence of the past and promote their own image before the world.

The spirit of caring about others as much if not more than personal profit would bring blessings on all members of all societies, which would profit the inhabitants of the whole world.