

May 21, 2010

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is being misled by draft Bush-era reports that endorse the "wet method" of asbestos removal -- and we are making sure the EPA knows the truth! Public Justice and seven environmental, public interest advocacy and trade organizations just sent an urgent letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson exposing the misleading and false draft reports.

The letter raises red flags about draft reports vouching for the experimental asbestos abatement method commonly called the "wet method," in which the asbestos is left in place and merely hosed down with water when a structure is demolished.



The "wet method" of asbestos removal in Ft. Worth.

The letter notes that EPA staff reviews of the draft reports have uncovered "factual errors, failures to follow EPA procedures, and apparent inconsistencies with EPA regulations and policies." Nevertheless, the agency's Office of Research and Development "is still pushing the [wet] method."

The letter says that the wet method "does not work, and can potentially expose workers and nearby residents to asbestos," which is a known carcinogen. "For these reasons, we are deeply dismayed to learn that the AACM is still being actively pursued as a research and regulatory priority, and that EPA may soon release two final test reports that mislead decision-makers and endorse the method," according to the letter. "We urge you to reevaluate the accuracy of the draft AACM test reports and stop diverting agency resources to the consideration and development of this dangerous technique," the letter says. It also asks that, as a first step, EPA release for public review and comment all internal EPA and external peer review comments about the AACM and its various tests and reports.

The Bush EPA pursued the method because it is much faster than the agency's current practice under the Clean Air Act's national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants (NESHAP) for asbestos demolition, which requires workers to remove and dispose of asbestos before demolition. The wet method leaves asbestos in place during demolition and uses water sprays to try to suppress asbestos contamination. In 2008, Public Justice won a 67-page federal district court ruling that St. Louis and the city-owned Lambert-St. Louis International Airport violated federal law when they demolished 99 asbestos-laden buildings in Bridgeton, Missouri without removing the asbestos first.

The letter was signed by Public Justice, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, AFL-CIO, Building & Construction Trades Department of AFL-CIO, International Association of Heat & Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization.

To read the letter, [click here](#).

The EPA letter is only the latest example of Public Justice's continuing campaign to block efforts by cities and the U.S. EPA to ignore and weaken federal asbestos safety standards. Thank you for helping make this critically-important public interest work possible.

Arthur Bryant
Executive Director
Public Justice and the
Public Justice Foundation

P.S. Please forward this email to friends and colleagues who'd be interested. (When you do so, delete the information below about unsubscribing, or they could unsubscribe you.) To make a special contribution, renew your membership, or join us, please [click here](#).

email: abryant@publicjustice.net
voice: 202-797-8600
web: <http://www.publicjustice.net>

Public Justice | 1825 K Street, NW | Suite 200 | Washington | DC | 20006