

https://www.starbeacon.com/news/local_news/making-filthy-five-polluters-list/article_816f563b-62f8-54da-b378-f3379e7fe428.html

Making Filthy Five polluters list

SHELLEY TERRY

Jul 19, 2007



ASHTA CHEMICALS at 3509 Middle Road in Ashtabula Township.

BILL WEST

The Star Beacon; Ashtabula, Ohio



ASHTABULA TOWNSHIP - - ASHTA Chemicals, named one of the top-five mercury polluters in the United States, would reap economic benefits if it eliminated mercury in chlorine production, a new environmental report said today.

The Filthy Five, as the report labels them, are ASHTA at 3509 Middle Road in Ashtabula; Olin Corp. plants in Charleston, Tenn., and Augusta, Ga.; PPG Industries in Natrium, W.Va., and ERCO Worldwide in Port Edwards, Wis.

The report, "Cleaning Up: Taking Mercury-Free Chlorine Production to the Bank," was released Wednesday by Oceana, a group dedicated to protecting and restoring the world's oceans. It focuses on how these chlorine plants refuse to switch to mercury-free technology, despite major economic and environmental benefits.

Chlorine is a chemical building block used in everything from swimming pools to plastic tents to paper towels. Mercury-cell chlorine plants make chlorine by pumping a saltwater solution through a vat of mercury, or a mercury cell, which catalyzes an electrolytic chemical reaction. Through this process, mercury pollution is released into the air and waterways.

The report also analyzes more than 115 chlorine plants that are shifting, or have shifted, to mercury-free technology, and shows how ASHTA Chemicals could protect the health of county residents and the local environment, while saving money.

"We're embarrassed by the fact ASHTA has failed to stop emitting mercury into the air," said Jack Shaner, public affairs director, Ohio Environmental Council, which is working with Oceana to stop mercury pollution in Ohio.

"ASHTA needs to step up to the plate and act responsibly toward it's employees and the community," Shaner said.

Between 1987 and 2005, ASHTA Chemicals released more than 13 tons of mercury into the air, Shaner said. Only two years ago, the ASHTA Chemicals reported having emitted 813 pounds of mercury into the air, the report said. In the past, it has been fined by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio attorney general for having discharged mercury into Lake Erie.

Longtime chronic exposure to low doses of man-made mercury can cause autoimmune and neurological diseases, Dr. Rosa Kincaid, a family practice physician in St. Louis said during a conference call, Wednesday.

"We're seeing an increase in multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and autism," she said. "The most at risk are children because their brains are still developing."

ASHTA Chemicals officials declined to comment Wednesday but said a statement may be released within the next day or two.

In September 2004, Ohio EPA cracked down on ASHTA, getting the plant to agree to reduce it's mercury emissions by about 80 percent and to eliminate the discharge of 30 grams of mercury annually into the lake, or the Ashtabula River or it's tributaries. The agreement resolved water-pollution violations and moved the plant from being Ohio's most prolific mercury polluter to being the seventh-highest, within one year.

- - [SHELLEY TERRY - Staff Writer](#)

Star Beacon Print Edition: 7/19/2007

[Click here to order our 7/19/2007 Archive edition.](#)

TRENDING VIDEO

Star Beacon Events

 See All Events  Add your event

Sat, Mar 20



Eric Andrews Live at Debonne Vineyards!
Geneva-on-the-Lake, OH

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20