

## FACT SHEET - CAMDEN ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### **CAMDEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS:**

#### Contaminated Soil – a legacy of Camden's industrial past:

- ◆ Camden City contains 2 federal Superfund sites and 114 known contaminated sites. Common pollutants are lead, mercury, PCB's (chemicals formerly used as coolants and lubricants in electrical equipment, now banned from use), solvents (TCE, PCE, and other volatile organic compounds, known as VOCs), arsenic, and petroleum products.
- ◆ Toxins in the soil can spread through the air or through groundwater. People can be harmed when they are directly exposed to them by skin contact, breathing them in, or drinking them. If a person touches contaminated soil, they could spread the contamination to food or water. Children playing in contaminated areas can breathe in or swallow the toxins.

#### "Dumping" in Camden

- ◆ The polluting facilities that no one wants are often "dumped" in Camden. The DEP has identified over 350 operating facilities in the City which emit air pollutants, discharge contaminants to soil or water, and/or use hazardous substances. They include power plants, a cement grinding facility, a gypsum plant, and chemical, paint, and food processing companies.
- ◆ Camden City is a center for waste disposal and "recycling" facilities, such as the regional incinerator, the county sewage treatment plant, and at least 30 businesses which recycle scrap metal, hazardous waste barrels, construction debris, and other contaminated waste.
- ◆ The South Jersey Port Corporation operates two port terminals in South Camden. The port operations cause diesel emissions from the 400 ships that visit the Port each year, and from diesel-operated loading equipment. The Port also provides space for heavy industrial uses.
- ◆ The Port operations and the industrial facilities bring in very heavy volumes of diesel truck traffic. As many as 328,500 trucks per year travel through South Camden neighborhoods.

#### Polluted air:

- ◆ Fine particulate (PM 10 and PM 2.5) pollution levels in South Camden are among the highest in the state. Camden County has been declared in non-attainment of the new PM 2.5 standard, and a DEP study showed there are sections of the Waterfront South neighborhood that may have levels above the health-based standards for fine particulates.
- ◆ Inhalable particulates (PM 10 and PM 2.5) can be lodged in the lungs and aggravate asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis, and can cause stress to the heart, leading to premature death.
- ◆ Ozone levels in Camden County exceed air quality standards.
- ◆ Ozone also aggravates respiratory conditions, such as difficulty breathing, chest pains, throat irritation, congestion, asthma, scarring of lung tissue, and premature death.
- ◆ The diesel emissions from trucks and ships are a major source of air pollution. Diesel exhaust contains many toxic substances, including formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, benzene, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

- ◆ Camden air also contains various hazardous air pollutants, including metals and VOCs. The air quality modeling conducted by DEP during its Air Toxics Study showed arsenic, cadmium, dioxin, hydrogen sulfide, lead, manganese, and nickel levels were potentially above the acceptable health benchmarks in some sections of Waterfront South. A study of PCB deposition revealed Camden had the highest levels recorded in the state.
- ◆ Hazardous air pollutants can increase risk of cancer.

#### Poisoned water:

- ◆ For decades, until 1998, Camden's drinking water came from wells, including the wells at the Puchack Well Field Superfund site in Pennsauken, that were severely contaminated with VOCs, hexavalent chromium, and other toxins.
- ◆ Camden water more recently has still shown some VOC contamination.
- ◆ The VOCs and chromium that has been found in Camden water can cause cancer, liver and kidney disease, and other illnesses.

#### Lead:

- ◆ Most houses in Camden were built before lead was banned in 1970 and contain lead paint.
- ◆ Lead levels in the drinking water in many homes and in Camden's public schools have also been found at dangerously high levels.
- ◆ Chipping and exposed lead paint can be breathed in as dust or be swallowed.
- ◆ Children who become lead poisoned suffer from learning disabilities, delayed growth, brain damage, and behavior problems. Severe lead poisoning can cause coma and death.

#### The Toll on people's health

- ◆ Studies show that Camden City residents have unusually high rates of respiratory diseases, especially asthma. People with asthma are particularly vulnerable to the effects of pollution.
- ◆ Camden City residents have elevated rates of cancer of the lung, esophagus, stomach, liver, kidney, and pancreas. Lung cancer rates are especially high compared to the state-wide rates.

**SOME CAMDEN CITY POLLUTING FACILITIES AND CONTAMINATED SITES:**

BECKETT PORT TERMINAL -- docking piers for large ships; facilities for loading and unloading materials

ART METALCRAFT PLATING CO., 529 S. 2<sup>ND</sup> ST. - electroplating company

STATE METAL INDUSTRIES, 941 S. 2<sup>ND</sup> ST. - aluminum smelter and processor

PSE&G, 2<sup>ND</sup> AND SPRUCE - electric power generation facility

CAMCORE – 260 CHESTNUT ST. –aluminum smelting operation

DURO PLATING, 273 KAIGHN AVE –electroplating business

CENTRAL METALS, 1054 S. 2<sup>ND</sup> ST. - metal processing company.

GEORGIA PACIFIC GYPSUM CORPORATION, 1101 SO. FRONT ST. - manufactures various types of gypsum products.

CAMDEN IRON & METAL, FRONT AND ATLANTIC - largest scrap metal operation

PEERLESS CASTING, 250 MECHANIC –aluminum processor

PLASTICS CONSULTING, 1431 FERRY AVENUE - coating and engraving.

R. FANELLE’S, FERRY AVENUE - scrap metal recycler

NATIONAL PAPER RECYCLING, 1537 FERRY AVE – recycles cardboard, paper, and plastic

CAMDEN COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY (CCMUA). regional sewage treatment plant

CONTAINER RECYCLERS, 301 WINSLOW STREET - cleans and recycles plastic barrels that stored hazardous substances,

WELSBACH/GENERAL GAS MANTLE SUPERFUND SITE, 4<sup>TH</sup>/JEFFERSON - manufacturer of gas lantern mantles created radioactive hot spots

AMERICAN MINERALS – JEFFERSON STREET –grinds zircon and pyrite

MCANDREW FORBES (MAFCO), 3<sup>RD</sup> AND JEFFERSON – Licorice manufacturer

ST. LAWRENCE CEMENT (BROADWAY TERMINAL) - cement grinding facility

COGEN POWER PLANT, CHELTON/BROADWAY. co-generation power plant

HOSPITAL LAUNDRY SERVICE, 2224 BROADWAY - laundry service

BROADWAY PORT TERMINAL -- large industrial area with new pier for ship docking and loading and unloading

AIR PRODUCTS AND CHEMICALS, 2710 BROADWAY --produces and fills liquid nitrogen, oxygen, argon, helium, and carbon dioxide tanks.

INCINERATOR (CAMDEN COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY), 600 MORGAN BLVD - trash-to- steam incinerator

COLONIAL PROCESSING, 1930 SO. 6<sup>TH</sup> ST/VIOLA - manufactures welding and soldering equipment, metal coating and engraving.

CLEMENT COVERALL. 619-32 CARL MILLER BLVD - contaminated site where paint and varnish company was located.

COMARCO, 501 JACKSON STREET --pork processing company

MARTIN AARON SUPERFUND SITE, 1542 BROADWAY - area contaminated by companies which recycled and reconditioned drums containing hazardous materials

BROADWAY FINISHING -- 1621 BROADWAY - industrial paint shop

INNOVATIVE RECOVERY METALS, 1500 SOUTH 6<sup>TH</sup> AT ATLANTIC --scrap metal operation

SL SURFACE TECHNOLOGIES. 6<sup>TH</sup>/ATLANTIC --chromium plating facility

CWS INDUSTRIES, 726 KAIGHN AVE - electroplating polishing, and anodizing operation

CAMDETT CORPORATION, 1501 PINE ST. - former site of chemical company

MONSANTO SITE. vacant abandoned industrial site.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER. Closed early education school on site contaminated with arsenic, scheduled to be rebuilt after partial clean up and capping.

LANNING SQUARE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 501 WILLIAMS STREET - elementary school that is a known contaminated site, closed in 2002 because structurally unsound.

---

This Fact Sheet was produced for the National EJ Tour by the South Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (SJEJA), September, 2006.