

Commentary

Time to speak out against 50 years of pollution

Hercules has a notorious, well-earned reputation in Glynn County.

Owners of the chemical operation—across from the entrance to the St. Simons causeway—have been skirting environmental law for 50 years.

Toxaphene, benzene and chloroform, serious hazards to human health, are among the Hercules-generated contaminants that still poison our groundwater and marshes.

Risks of this contamination are ominous:

- Benzene, like toxaphene, causes cancer.
- Chloroform is linked to liver failure.
- The Centers for Disease Control report that the “premature death rate” in Glynn County has grown 15 percent over the past decade. The CDC also notes above-average cancer rates in the area.
- Fish-consumption advisories have been issued for decades; some undoubtedly could be linked to toxic releases by Hercules.
- Research also shows that dolphins native to nearby waters have some of the world’s highest rates of cancer in marine mammals.

For their unrelenting, recklessly hazardous history of pollution, Hercules has been repeatedly warned by environmental regulators over many years.

But under Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division (EPD) toothless enforcement, residual contamination continues spreading. Test-well sampling beyond the industrial site reveals dangerous levels of pollution—far above established safety limits.

Hercules has defied required clean-up plans, and pollution continues endangering the public and degrading surrounding property.

Yet, a new permit appears to be imminent. Citizens should voice their concerns to the EPD by March 30.

After 50 years, it’s time for the EPD to hold this chronic contaminator accountable to the citizens of Glynn County.

Public health and quality of life must not be forfeited to boost the profits of irresponsible industry.

David Kyler
Center for a Sustainable Coast

All submissions should be addressed to:

Mr. Jim Brown, Program Manager
Hazardous Waste Corrective Action Program
2 MLK, Jr. Drive, SE, Suite 1054
Atlanta, Georgia 30334.