

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Groups Unveil New York's "Dirty Dozen" Awards "Winners" Asked to Step Up and Make Necessary Changes

(Albany) On Thursday June 1st, community and environmental groups across the state unveiled the "winners" of Citizens' Environmental Coalition's (CEC) Third Annual "Dirty Dozen" Awards to draw attention to pollution and environmental health problems in New York State. Each Dirty Dozen award is a pair of worn children's shoes, mounted to a plaque featuring the name of the winning site and carrying the message: "NY's Children ask: Will you take the necessary steps to right these wrongs?" Each award is unique and represents how children are particularly vulnerable to toxic exposures.

"Winners" highlighted in Albany include: General Electric and the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation for Dewey Loeffel Landfill Superfund Site; Lafarge Building Materials and the NYSDEC for the Ravena Tire Burning Project; Hopewell Precision, Inc for groundwater contamination and vapor intrusion; and IBM for 19 Superfund sites across NY State. Other winners, highlighted today in media events in Buffalo, Long Island and Buchanan, include Cheektowaga's "Toxic Triangle", the EPA for Peter Cooper superfund site, West Valley Demonstration Project, Keyspan's Northport and Port Jefferson Power Plants, Indian Point Power Plant, New York Organic Fertilizer company and Willet Dairy, a factory farm in Cayuga County.

"The awards this year focus on how the environmental problems we're highlighting are affecting our children and our future. I'd like the winners this year to "walk a mile in *these* shoes"- the shoes of the children affected by groundwater contamination, the waste site with no warning signs, or the air pollution in their schools and homes," said Laura McCarthy, Program Associate with Citizens' Environmental Coalition. "The goal of this award is to get the bad actors to take "steps" in the right direction. We hope this event will encourage them to do so."

A selection committee evaluated nominations from across the state. It was comprised of environmental professionals, public health experts, and worker health and safety advocates: Dr. David Carpenter, State University at Albany School of Public Health; Roger Cook, Western New York Committee for Occupation Safety and Health; Jonathan Bennett, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health; and Bobbi Chase Wilding, Citizens' Environmental Coalition.

The Dirty Dozen "winners" were selected based on the severity of the threat they pose and the unwillingness of the polluters and government officials to adequately address the situation.

This year's awardees are:

1. [Cheektowaga's "Toxic Triangle" \(Cheektowaga/Depew\)](#)
2. [Lafarge Building Materials for Ravena Tire Burning Project \(Ravena\)](#)
3. [NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation for Ravena Tire Burning Project \(Ravena\)](#)
4. [NYSDEC and General Electric for Dewey Loeffel Landfill \(Nassau\)](#)
5. [Keyspan's Northport and Port Jefferson Power Plants \(Long Island\)](#)
6. [Hopewell Precision, Inc. \(Hopewell Junction\)](#)
7. [IBM \(19 Superfund Sites across NYS including Shenendoah\)](#)
8. [Environmental Protection Agency for Peter Cooper Landfill \(PCC\)\(Gowanda\)](#)
9. [West Valley Demonstration Project \(West Valley\)](#)
10. [New York Organic Fertilizer Company \(NYOFCO\) \(Bronx\)](#)
11. [Entergy's Indian Point Power Plant \(Buchanan\)](#)
12. [Willet Dairy \(Genoa\)](#)

See attached list for descriptions of the winners with quotes from each nominating group.

For pictures from, the press events click [here](#)

Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC) is the leading statewide environmental health advocacy organization working to eliminate pollution and protect human health and the environment in New York. For over twenty-three years, we have accomplished this by serving as the nexus of grassroots organizing, statewide policy advocacy and national collaboration. Citizens' Environmental Coalition is already accepting nominations for next years' awards. Visit [cectoctic.org](http://cectoctic.org) for more information on our work.

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## **2006 "Dirty Dozen" Polluter Awards**

### **Cheektowaga's "Toxic Triangle" (Cheektowaga/Depew)**

The six sites of Cheektowaga's "Toxic Triangle" include the Buffalo Crushed Stone Quarry Inc. owned by Steven Detwiler, Land Reclamation, Schultz Landfill, Old Land Reclamation, Twin Village Recycling, and Depew's Landfill. These six sites have been cumulatively linked to increasing the risk of respiratory problems, Hodgkin disease, gastrointestinal problems, allergies, skin ailments, fibroid problems, dizziness, learning disabilities, numerous types of cancers; including a high rate of uterine cancer, autoimmune diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, a high rate of lupus, and other related diseases within two miles of the area. Also, there is a 31% rate of asthma in children in this area.

The surrounding residential community includes Resurrection Elementary School, Hilltop Daycare Center located at the entrance to the quarry, hospice, three parks, two churches, and a large retirement home/community. Residents feel that Buffalo Crushed Stones' two limestone mines, and two asphalt plants are creating the largest health risks. The quarry and its operations release hydrogen sulfide gas, silica in the dust which blankets the surrounding community, diesel particulates, asphalt particulates, high ozone from the humongous trucks which operate in the mine and come and go, and toxins from the unlined, leaching landfills which are spread faster by the pumping of ground water from the mines. This pumping also creates a rotten egg odor which is the neurotoxin hydrogen sulfide.

**Contact:** John Carl Stonefield, Cheektowaga Citizens Coalition, 716-683-4702, [jjstonefield@wizard.com](mailto:jjstonefield@wizard.com),

"Our group nominated these six sites together as a whole because together they all contribute to the environmental catastrophe in which we live. Together they are destroying our quality of life. One of our biggest greatest concerns should be for the children growing up here – their immune systems are still developing, and any exposure now will lead to greater risk of serious diseases in twenty to thirty years when they are adults," said John Stonefield of Cheektowaga Citizens Coalition.

### **Lafarge Building Materials for Ravenna Tire Burning Project (Ravenna)**

Tires contain heavy metals including mercury and lead which cannot be destroyed by incineration. It has been estimated that between 20% and 50% of heavy metals incinerated in facilities such as cement kilns are released into the air, making them more bio-available. Heavy metals are major neurotoxins which harm children's brain development. Also, tires contain chlorine which causes the formation of dioxins when burned. According to the US EPA, there is no safe level of exposure to dioxins which, "even at minute levels pose cancer risks and health concerns...including possible damage to the immune and reproductive systems." Lafarge's tire burning project uses cement kilns which are not designed as hazardous waste incinerators and which are not required to have dual chambers or afterburners like municipal incinerators. For more information on this site, please see next entry.

**Contact:** Susan Falzon, Friends of Hudson, 518-822-0334, [falzon@mhccable.com](mailto:falzon@mhccable.com)

“Both Lafarge and the DEC ignored public health and the public interest in pushing this tire-burning proposal forward. The DEC should not have issued a negative declaration in this case. The public have a right to have Lafarge’s application undergo the scrutiny that a positive declaration would have required.”

### **NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation for Ravena Tire Burning Project (Ravena)**

On July 19<sup>th</sup> 2005, the NYSDEC issued a “negative declaration”, not requiring Lafarge Corporation to submit an EIS prior to burning 4.8 million whole tires per year at its Ravena Cement factory located directly across the road from two schools. The DEC has allowed Lafarge to increase their carbon monoxide emissions by 99 metric tons per year, when a 100 metric ton per year increase would have triggered a new source review. Cement kilns are not designed, constructed, operated or intended for the purpose of scrap tire incineration. The EPA has stated that cement kilns are one of the largest sources of dioxin emissions in the United States. By-products of burning scrap tires in cement kilns include mercury, lead, formaldehyde and cadmium; chemicals recognized as causing cancer or reproductive dysfunction.

**Contact:** Susan Falzon, Friends of Hudson, 518-822-0334, [falzon@mhccable.com](mailto:falzon@mhccable.com)

“In issuing this permit the DEC refused to include permit conditions that could have made the Ravena plant safer and cleaner. They could have capped mercury emissions but they avoided that responsibility. The DEC could have refused to allow Lafarge a 99 metric tons per year increase in CO emissions. Unfortunately, the DEC has a record of going easy on this Lafarge plant. In the past five years they have neglected to take enforcement actions against Lafarge when permit conditions were exceeded. Lafarge is one of the worst polluters in the state and it is shameful that DEC allows them to continue to be. This tire-burning permit is another indication that DEC is prepared to turn a blind eye where Lafarge is concerned. The citizens of New York State have a right to expect that DEC is holding polluting industries accountable and not permitting projects that are hazardous to public health. In this case the DEC has failed the public.”

### **NYSDEC and General Electric for Dewey Loeffel Landfill (Nassau)**

The Dewey Loeffel Landfill consists of 46 thousand tons (92 million pounds) of liquid toxic waste, twice the size of Love Canal. Dewey Loeffel obtained a scavengers permit in 1952 to operate a transfer station of waste industrial solvents, oils, paints and other chemicals generated by General Electric, Schenectady Chemicals, Bendix Eclipse and other chemicals. From the 1950’s until 1970, this area was used as an industrial waste site for chemicals including benzene, xylene, toluene, methyl chloride and PCB’s. In 1992, it was discovered that groundwater contamination was effecting area wells, and while filters were installed to alleviate this danger, according to local group, UNCAGED, the DEC is holding off on the construction of the Leachate Collection Treatment Unit (on-site at the Dewey Loeffel Landfill), which would lesson the danger to nearby homeowner wells. GE is still responsible for the pollution in Nassau Lake, where fish have been found to have elevated levels of PCBs in their flesh.

**Contact:** Kelly Travers-Main, United Neighbors Concerned About General Electric and Dewey Loeffel Landfill, [uncaged@berk.com](mailto:uncaged@berk.com)

“It has long been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If we are to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must embrace this idea and act to prevent exposures before they compromise the health and safety of our families and homes.”

### **Keyspan’s Northport and Port Jefferson Power Plants (Long Island)**

Keyspan’s Northport power plant is the number one polluting plant on Long Island and the second most polluting plant in the Northeast. Port Jefferson Power Plant is the second worst industrial polluter on

Long Island. Keyspan's plants are emitting large amounts of polluting greenhouse gases and burning twice as much fuel as plants using more modern technologies. The emissions contribute to global warming, acid rain, soot, and smog related health problems, including asthma and other respiratory diseases. Mercury and other toxic chemicals are bi-products of the Power plant emissions.

**Contact:** *Sarah Anker, Community Health and Environmental Coalition, 631-476-0167, CHEC@optonline.net*

"This is an excellent opportunity to call attention to an issue that directly affects our health and our environment. It's vitally important KeySpan re-power because they are the most polluting plant on Long Island. It's time for KeySpan to step up to the plate and do the right thing to protect the health of our children. If they are making profits, then they can afford to clean up their mess."

### **Hopewell Precision, Inc. (Hopewell Junction)**

Groundwater contamination from Hopewell Precision, Inc. qualified this site for the National Priorities List. Both trichloroethylene and trichloroethane (TCE and TCA) are the prevalent volatile compounds. The groundwater plume is now spreading 1 3/4 miles by 1/2 mile wide. EPA estimates that the pollution can effect up to 27,000 people over time as the pollution continues to spread. Under investigation by EPA and DEC between 1979 and 1993, the company managed to pollute over 100 homes. At the present time, 123 homes have water contamination, 51 have carbon filtration systems, 141 homes measured vapor intrusion in their sub slab and 46 homes have vapor mitigation units installed. In 1997 and 2002, Hopewell Precision received many fines for storing TCE and TCA on their property, along with drums of unknown substances.

**Contact:** *Debra Hall, Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water, debraduncan@*

"Homeowners that are affected from the water and air pollution caused by Hopewell Precision, Inc. have lived with this time bomb possibly for as long as 30 or more years. Although the mitigation units installed in affected homes by the EPA and the NYS DEC have cleaned up the water and air, they are only a stop gap measure. We do not know how long it will take for the EPA to find a permanent solution or if they will ever find one. We worry about the health studies connecting to cancer and other major illnesses. Our children are especially at risk. We live with a stigma which affects the sales of our homes. The victims of the Hopewell Precision Superfund site want to hear more than denials and excuses from Hopewell Precision. After all, this mess is not our fault."

### **IBM (19 Superfund Sites across NYS including Shenandoah)**

IBM is the "potentially responsible party" as defined by the EPA for 19 Federal Superfund Sites in New York State. The Shenandoah groundwater contamination site was discovered in April 2000 and added to the national priorities list on June 2001. Over 100 homes with private wells have contaminated groundwater, over 60 homes are contaminated above state and federal safe water levels with the chemical perchloroethylene and twenty-five of those also have trichloroethylene. In a November 2005 study by the NYS Department of Health, it was reported that the area will experienced a higher risk of cancer due to the chemicals released in the air at the IBM plant a mile north of the Shenandoah area.

**Contact:** *Denis Callinan, Concerned Residents of East Fishkill, 845-221-3598, CallinanD@aol.com*

"The EPA, the NYS DEC, the NYS DOH and our local, county and state representatives assured us in June 2000 that it was not IBM who caused the contamination in our wells. One year later they announced it was IBM chip trays being cleaned with IBM chemicals and IBM employees supervising the operation of an IBM contractor. Our good neighbor IBM continues to deny responsibility while they pollute our air with more than 32,000 pounds of toxins released annually from their stacks and over a million pounds of toxins released into the Gildersleeve creek next to the well fields of a local high school. Having been named by the EPA as the potentially responsible party for fifty-four federal superfund sites in the US, nineteen of which are in New York State, IBM deserves this award many times over."

**Environmental Protection Agency for Peter Cooper Landfill (PCC)(Gowanda)**

PCC and its predecessor, Eastern Tanners Glue Company, manufactured animal glue in Gowanda from 1904 until 1972, and industrial adhesives from 1972 until the plant closed in 1985. Between 1925 and Oct. 1970, PCC used the northwest portion of the property to pile sledges, remaining after the animal-glue manufacturing process. These wastes, known as cookhouse sludge because of a cooking cycle that occurred just prior to extraction of the glue, are derived from chrome-tanned hides obtained from tanneries. Numerous investigations conducted since 1981 have shown the cover material to be eroded away and waste exposed in some locations, the concrete retaining wall as collapsed, and leachate seeps are discharging into the creek. The waste material has been shown to contain elevated levels of chromium, arsenic, zinc and some organic compounds.

**Contact:** *Maria Maybee, Great Lakes United, 716-337-2942, mmaybee@msn.com*

“Politicians and community at large have misconceptions that someone is doing the right thing. We need to make better laws and ensure healthy actions. The responsible parties are capable of paying for full clean up.”

**West Valley Demonstration Project (West Valley)**

Much of the nuclear waste at the West Valley site is considered unsafely stored since it will potentially be exposed in erosion processes. The nuclear waste at this site will be hazardous for tens of thousands of years. The burial grounds were filled when dumping regulations were much weaker and exhumation has found buried tanks that have ruptured. Also, the main Process Building has leaking tanks which have been contaminating the groundwater since the 1960s. Currently, the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear wastes is currently working with state and national groups to implement a full cost accounting study that will look at the real economic and environmental costs of different cleanup options.

**Contact:** *Maria Maybee, Great Lakes United, 716-337-2942, mmaybee@msn.com*

“Most of my family lives within Cattaraugus Creek's flood plain and like many in our territory we hike, fish, hunt venison, and forage wild onions as well as swim, and go rafting the creek. Health issues in the region are serious. Children who live near Cattaraugus Creek have leukemia. Nine of my nieces and nephews children have developmental disabilities. Several relatives are surviving lymphoma, breast cancer, colon cancer, autoimmune diseases such as diabetes, thyroid disease, and lupus like diseases. My uncle and grandmother died from colon cancer, my father was diabetic, had cancerous colon polyps removed and died painfully from pancreatic and liver cancer. Two cousins had lung cancer and their bones became very brittle before they died. Radionuclide wastes coming from West Valley site and arsenic, hexavalent chromium, zinc and other chemicals from Peter Cooper Superfund site are known to cause these ailments.”

“We all deserve clean water, what can we do for future generations? Make a commitment to ensure that waste is stored properly in face of future erosion problems and prompt clean up of groundwater contamination at both West Valley and Peter Cooper sites.”

**New York Organic Fertilizer Company (NYOFCO) (Bronx)**

NYOFCO has the capacity to handle up to 70% of New York City's sewage sludge, an unknown mixture of residential and industrial sewage. The sludge is dried, formed into pellets, marketed as fertilizer and sold across the country for all types of uses, including agricultural. The plant has one central emissions stack, which when tested, revealed the presence of VOCs, SVOCs, Dioxins, heavy metals, Nitrous Oxides, and particulate matter. Noxious odors escape from the plant and cover an area of roughly a 2-mile radius. The plant is located in a neighborhood where 30% of the children suffer from asthma.

**Contact:** *Elena Conte, Sustainable South Bronx, 718-617-4668, elena@ssbx.org*

“As Synagro's largest municipal contract, NYOFCO ought to be its best-run ope

### **Entergy's Indian Point Power Plant (Buchanan)**

Indian Point has been described even by those in favor of nuclear power as 'the wrong plant in the wrong place.' Located on the banks of the Hudson just over 40 miles from Times Square, an accident or a terrorist attack at Indian Point would wreak havoc on the lives of the nearly 20 million people who live and work in the plant's peak injury zone. The plant's inadequate security, poor safety record, deteriorating infrastructure and proven attractiveness to the 9/11 terrorists are all factors that increase the likelihood of such a catastrophe. Adding to the plant's risks is a storage plan that would place highly radioactive fuel in one spot, increasing its attractiveness to terrorists. Indian Point's notorious evacuation plan has been criticized by experts including former FEMA Director James Lee Witt as unworkable. Yet year after year, FEMA overrides the elected officials who refuse to certify the plan. Indian Point, actually two plants, 2 and 3, will have to renew its licenses soon. Despite Indian Point's ongoing malfunctions, the NRC refuses to grant an independent assessment of the plant, which currently is leaking strontium-90 and other radioactive materials into the groundwater and the Hudson River. Currently it has 2000 tons of radioactive waste on site; these are the most toxic materials known to humankind.

**Contact:** *Darcy Casteleiro, Project Coordinator for Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition (IPSEC) and Indian Point Campaign Associate for Riverkeeper, 914-478-4501 ext 239, darcy@riverkeeper.org.*

"Indian Point's safety risks trouble the majority of people in our region so much that a bipartisan Congressional coalition which includes all representatives of the people who live and work within the 10-mile radius surrounding the plant has appealed to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to require FEMA to explain its approval for the unworkable emergency plan and to allow a comprehensive and independent safety review of the plant. The NRC has denied both requests. To grant either would likely lead to the plant's shutdown, a chance the NRC will not take— even as Indian Point continues to leak deadly radioactive waste into the ground and the Hudson River, not to mention its 2000 tons of nuclear waste that increases the site's attractiveness to terrorists. Entergy, the plant's owner/operator, refuses to minimize threats to the public health and safety of millions of people so they can maximize their billions in profits. The instant Indian Point shuts, everyone living and working in the metropolitan area will be exponentially safer."

### **Willet Dairy (Genoa)**

Willet Dairy operates the largest CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation) in upstate New York. The dairy, started in 1979, reports housing 7,600 cows, none of which are pastured. In 2000, a pipe connecting two manure storage pits on Willet Dairy Farm broke, causing a manure spill into a tributary of Salmon Creek. NYSDEC imposed a fine of \$15,000. Neighbors joined together and filed a "citizen suit" under the Clean Water Act. The complaint charges Willet Dairy and its owners, Dennis and Scott Eldred, with violations of the zero discharge rule and water quality standards under the U.S. Clean Water Act, and with contaminating water wells and causing serious health problems among the seven plaintiffs. Across NYS, there are over 1,000 permitted CAFOs. The Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter, which is not a party to the legal action, has received numerous odor and water quality complaints from New York State CAFO neighbors. It has also recorded numerous instances of failure by the NYSDEC to respond to citizen complaints about CAFOs.

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