

Kruger Introduces Bill To Mandate PCB Testing in City Schools

by Brooklyn Eagle (edit@brooklyneagle.net), published online 04-25-2008

BERGEN BEACH — In response to the growing outrage over the presence of PCBs in New York City schools, Senator Carl Kruger (D-Southern Brooklyn) announced at a news conference recently that he is introducing legislation in Albany to require that the city allocate emergency funds to test all public schools that are possibly contaminated with the toxic and illegal chemical.

Kruger, chair of the Senate Committee on Social Services, Children and Families, held his news conference outside Public School 312 in Bergen Beach, one of the Brooklyn schools built between 1960 and 1977 — the years PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, were used in the caulking around windowsills and door frames.

He was joined by Community Board 18 District Manager Dorothy Turano, PS 312 PA President Christine Kroening and IS 78 PA President Jack Falzone.

“The city refuses to accept responsibility for exposing children to a chemical that has been banned since 1977 — a chemical that has been linked to cancer, asthma and developmental problems,” Kruger said. “That’s why we need the state to step in with legislation mandating that all PCB-laced caulking is tested, removed and replaced with an environmentally safe material.”

Sen. Kruger said the city “has an obligation to dispense with the normal, lengthy bidding process and allocate emergency funds — no different than the \$1 million the Mayor just allocated to fix the slippery sidewalks around City Hall.”

The city has already said it will not conduct any “pre-emptive testing” for PCB contamination, a fact that Sen. Kruger finds particularly galling.

“They test for everything else — math and reading, regular assessment tests, and every other academic area big and small,” he said. “But when it comes to the real high-stakes testing — testing for the sake of health — they do nothing.”

Brooklyn has the most schools of any borough — 88 in total — constructed in the years PCBs were used in caulking. He noted that in addition to P.S. 312, the junior high two blocks away — Roy H. Mann I.S. 78 — was also on the list of possibly contaminated schools.

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