

September 22, 2005

Chancellor John R. Ryan
State University of New York
Albany, New York 12246

Dear Chancellor Ryan,

I am writing to you about PCB contamination in schools due to window caulking. In the fall of 2004, I discovered PCB soil contamination at my son's elementary school in Yorktown Heights, New York due to PCB-laden window caulking. The school district has remediated the soil at a cost of over \$200,000 under orders from the Westchester County Board of Health.

Since my discovery last fall, I have embarked on a mission to change state and federal regulations pertaining to PCB-laden caulk in schools. To educate the public and government sector with the goal of mandating PCB testing in schools, I created a website called www.pcbinschools.org.

With a number of newspapers writing articles about the contamination, one being the July 4th issue of the NY Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/04/nyregion/04pcbs.html?ex=1278129600&en=b988dd1d6d6fd53c&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss> there has been a lot of interest and concern from legislators and regulators on the county, state and federal levels. Case in point is the recent Westchester County Environmental Committee meeting with the EPA, Westchester County Board of Health on what the current regulatory standards and health hazards are. <http://www.northcountynews.com/view.asp?s=8-10-05/topstory.htm>. A follow-up meeting is anticipated within the next couple of weeks. Another is the introduction in the New York State Assembly by my state representative, Assemblyman Will Stephens for mandatory PCB testing in schools.

A number of studies in Europe have demonstrated that PCB in caulking can contaminate both the indoor and outdoor school environment. In December 2000, the University of Rhode Island had to close the Chafee Social Science Building due to PCB contamination primarily from PCB-laden caulking. In fact, recent testing on the masonry caulking at my son's elementary school demonstrated high levels of PCB migrating to the surface. Any student or worker touching the masonry caulking can easily contaminate themselves with PCB.

PCB-laden caulk has the health hazard potential to be as explosive as asbestos.

I am hoping that you will take the initiative and mandate testing for PCBs in masonry caulking and window caulking, especially before any construction project. According to the Construction Fund's website, there are 81 projects under construction. Some of these projects involve window replacement and masonry work. For example, Project 28344 at the University of Buffalo involves window/curtain wall replacement. Project 10315 at Oswego involves window replacement at Mahar Hall. Until sampling is done prior to replacement, window caulking and masonry caulking must be considered hazardous material and treated as such. Just think of the indoor and outdoor contamination caused by a construction worker unknowingly grinding away PCB-laden caulk from a building. The PCB in the dust will not only contaminate the worker, but also the indoor environment and soil.

At my son's elementary school in Yorktown Heights, the school district is going to remediate PCB contamination on the windows, doors and window sills as a result of the soil remediation.

Even though the school had an environmental consultants closely watch the soil removal, there was still contamination as a result of the clean-up. Just imagine the enormous contamination where no one is aware of the presence of PCB in the caulking.

Every student and worker in the SUNY school system must be protected from PCB exposure.

Please mandate immediate testing for PCBs in window caulking and masonry caulking.

I hope I have been of service to you. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Lefkowitz
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