



Let Others Make Noise. We'll Make Everything Else.

Industry Makes feels compelled to respond to an article published earlier this month by WNO that highlighted a recent “report” by the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) that claims to “illustrate toxic pollution in relation to poverty and minority populations along the Mississippi River Chemical Corridor.”

It was the very first sentence of this press release that caught the attention of Industry Makes by claiming that manufacturing throughout the years has turned working class communities into “some of the poorest and sickest in Louisiana.” ***Really?***

Communities where industry operates have the largest and most stable tax base, the best access to healthcare, the best schools, and the best quality of life. Industry brings to these communities’ quality jobs that include retirement plans, insurance for health, dental and vision, along with above-average incomes that sustain families, as well as provide quality services through the taxes they pay, including meals on wheels, emergency management services and funds for police and firefighters, to name a few.

The second sentence was just as egregious stating that although the Mississippi River Industrial Corridor had “technically” seen a decrease in greenhouse gases and total air- emissions, the risk had still grown exponentially in black communities- ***Huh?***

Census data indicates that there are both white and black people that live in the communities where industry operates. To be sure, Industry Makes turned to the LSU New Orleans Public Health Center that houses the Louisiana Tumor Registry and typed in the parishes that make up the Mississippi River Industrial Corridor to find that all cancer rates among the black population are below average in four out of six parishes. This data is in direct contradiction to the claims made by this updated “report” issued by the DSCEJ.

Finally, in the third sentence of the third paragraph, the real reason for the article was stated: “we have to stop the construction of new petrochemical facilities and reduce the concentration of them in minority communities.”

This is not about cancer, minority communities or protecting the people. This is about shutting down jobs, and forever affecting the quality of life in these communities for the benefit of the few. The few that are receiving millions of dollars from Bloomberg’s Beyond Petrochemicals Campaign.

So, what *is* beyond petrochemicals? Currently, nothing. Petrochemicals are responsible for the synthesis of ammonia that is the basis of all nitrogen fertilizers that feed the world, and plastics that are everywhere and used for everything, from the keypad that was used to write this response, to the wireless mouse used to send it, to the plexiglass that my upholstered polyester swivel chair sits on. And let's not forget about the indispensable plastics that are used in healthcare. From the flexible tubing that feeds patients, delivers oxygen, and monitors blood pressure; to catheters, intravenous containers, blood bags, sterile packaging, trays and basins, bedpans, handrails, and even thermal blankets. From the maternity ward to the intensive care unit- petrochemicals save lives, not endanger them.

It is glamorous and lucrative to be an environmental activist these days. Before you fall prey to the tactics, do your homework and ask yourself what your quality of life would be without the advances in chemistry that the Mississippi River Industrial Corridor provide through research and development of more efficient processes that are based soundly in science, not race.

Desiree Lemoine, Campaign Manager
Industry Makes