

To Chair Helm and the House Energy and Environment Committee  
Re: SB 995 - Community Toxics Reporting Act  
Date: 3/27/2017

Our small city of roughly 15,000 is in desperate need of information about what is in our air. The Dalles, Oregon is home to one of the few remaining creosote wood preservation facilities in the country.

Companies treating railroad ties with creosote on this Union Pacific-owned land have been in continuous operation since 1922. Most of these years, operations have occurred with little oversight or regulation. One facility is currently operated by AmeriTies West, LLC. This Union Pacific site has been on the National Priorities List (a Superfund site) since 1990, due to severe groundwater and soil contamination.

The Dalles has been steadily growing up around the plant and many residents are experiencing the adverse health impacts from breathing hazardous air toxics.

The main component of emissions released from the creosote treatment process is an odorous polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) called naphthalene. The EPA has deemed naphthalene a probable carcinogen, with exposure pathways including, but not limited to, inhalation.

Recent PAH air sampling, conducted by the Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ), show naphthalene concentrations in some parts of The Dalles can be 80 times over the long-term cancer risk benchmark set by Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Not to mention the toxic fumes are undeniably the source of pervasive and highly offensive odor.

Most of our schools, half of our residences, and our veterans home are all located above the plant, and are inundated with these noxious fumes regularly. Our children are playing on playgrounds during school hours when odors are strong, and many of them are experiencing asthma, headaches and nosebleeds, and episodes of hemolytic anemia (a condition in which red blood cells are destroyed and removed from the bloodstream before their normal lifespan is over) which is directly linked to naphthalene exposure in children.

DEQ received hundreds of formal complaints about the noxious and toxic fumes from AmeriTies last year alone. Most of these including worries about health effects of breathing in the fumes from the plant. Yet, there is no enforcement by the DEQ to protect our most vulnerable populations.

We are asking for your help because without full toxics monitoring and transparent results, the questions remains, is our air safe for us to breathe? Our community deserves to know how to answer this question. We deserve reliable, accurate and freely accessible information about the toxic emissions to the air and water in our community. We want live freely and enjoy our properties and outside spaces. We are asking for your help because we can't achieve this on our own with the resources available. The Dalles is a beautiful city with many wonderful things to offer. As longtime residents, we feel we need data about what is in our air and water in order to be informed citizens, capable of participating in policy and public health decisions. Please pass SB 995 out of the House Energy and Environment Committee and support its ultimate passage into law.