

LoudounNATS response to:

"*Sludge prompts disease fears*", **Washington Times**, Sean Salai, Apr 29, 2004
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/metro/20040429-122442-6727r.htm>

Sean Salai's article *Sludge Prompts Disease Fears* appearing in the 4/29/04 edition of this paper ignores important facts or reports them incorrectly. Residents from around the state, not only from Loudoun and Frederick Counties, will protest in Richmond, Ms. Messick was exposed to Frederick, not Loudoun county sludge and reported 3, not 2, near fatal allergic reactions to sludge. Her doctor prescribed "Eppi Pens," a well know antidote to life-threatening allergic reactions, not "a supply of needles that she can plunge into her skin," as reported by Mr. Salai.

The more serious problem is that Mr. Salai was given stacks of information and scientific data linking sludge exposure to health problems; he ignores all of it. He interviewed 16 people who attested to sludge related illnesses. He corresponded with Dr. David Lewis who has published three peer-reviewed articles questioning the safety of the sludge program. He never mentions any of this data including the following: 1) A September 2002 EPA Inspector General's memo states: "**EPA does not know whether current regulations, when adhered to, are protective of public health;**" 2) A CDC/National Institute of Occupational Safety Health Guide for Controlling Potential Risks to Exposure to Class B Sludge: July 2002, "These enteric organisms are usually associated with self-limited gastrointestinal illnesses but **can develop into more serious diseases in sensitive populations such as immune-compromised individuals, infants, young children and especially the elderly.**" 3) On Oct.29,2003 CBS Evening news reported the EPA Deputy Administrator admitting with regard to sludge. "**I can't answer it's perfectly safe. I can't answer it's not safe, said Paul Gilman.**"

Since there is no scientific evidence to show sludge is safe for the public health, Mr. Salai is left with quoting a state official's personal attack against critics of sludge. This verifies the contention of Virginia citizens that state and local health authorities wall themselves off from the public and from reality by refusing even to hear citizen complaints preferring to attack any citizen or scientist who dares to criticize what remains an inadequately tested and potentially harmful product.

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April 30, 2004