

Virginia Sewage Sludge Victims File Lawsuit Alleging Negligence, Private Nuisance and Trespass

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Contact: Barbara L. Rubin of Neighbors Against Toxic Sludge (NATS), 703-847-8430;
Web: <http://www.LOUDOUNNATS.ORG>

CLAREMONT, Va., Nov. 17 /U.S. Newswire/ -- After years of public complaints to unresponsive government officials about putrid smells and health concerns linked to sewage sludge land applications, six Virginia citizens have filed a nuisance lawsuit in Surry County, Virginia. The lawsuit alleges that the fundamental right of every Virginian to the use and enjoyment of his or her home has been impaired by Sussex-Surry LLC, land owners, and Synagro Central, Inc, sewage sludge haulers. The complaint alleges defendants have sprayed or dumped tons of sewage sludge on trees and land adjacent to the plaintiff's homes causing foul odors and dust particles associated with sewage sludge, to permeate the air. It also alleges these conditions are linked to plaintiffs emerging physical and emotional problems, interference with business, and driving one plaintiff out of the comfort of her home. The suit asks for 18.4 million dollars of compensatory and punitive damages, and injunctive relief.

"Filing this negligence lawsuit in Virginia is a ray of hope for hundreds of Virginia sewage sludge victims who have experienced a similar nuisance and, or who believe sludge is the cause of their health problems," says Barbara L. Rubin of Neighbors Against Toxic Sludge (NATS).

In Virginia, county after county has valiantly fought the sludge program. They have cited numerous health complaints, peer reviewed scientific studies that link sludge exposure and illnesses, CDC/National Institute of Occupational Safety Health (NIOSH) findings that workers exposed to sludge become ill, two EPA Inspector General and two National Academy of Science reports that found the science behind the sludge rule weak and out of date. All have been ignored by public officials and the Virginia Legislature. Instead, officials have embarked on an ever increasing program of forcing millions of tons of sewage sludge on neighbors to farm fields and wooded areas in the state, resulting in mounting numbers of sewage sludge victims.

Loudoun Neighbors Against Toxic Sludge has been working to implement a moratorium on land application of sewage sludge until there is credible scientific evidence it is safe for public health.

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