

## Company settles suit; agrees to chromium clean-up in Jersey City

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JERSEY CITY AND BEYOND – Under a settlement agreement reached this week in federal court, PPG Industries has agreed to clean up one of the last remaining chromium contamination sites in New Jersey, according to a national environmental organization that filed a lawsuit to get the clean-up completed.

Under the settlement agreement, PPG has agreed to remove 700,000 tons of chromium waste from Jersey City's Lafayette neighborhood, and will likely spend an estimated \$600 million to complete the remediation, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

PPG, a Pittsburgh-based company, will clear a nearly 17-acre site of hexavalent chromium, a cancer-causing toxin that has plagued the Lafayette area for more than 50 years. The area to be remediated includes a former PPG chromium plant site on Garfield Avenue and the surrounding community, including groundwater. Wherever possible, the cleanup will involve the excavation and removal of chromium wastes, and disposal in offsite hazardous waste landfills. Strict dust control measures will protect residents and workers during the cleanup.

PPG first began investigating the possibility of chromium contamination in 1982, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) began enforcement efforts at the PPG complex soon thereafter. In 1990 the company reached an agreement with the DEP to clean up the contaminated areas, but the agreement was never enforced.

In 2009, NRDC – in conjunction with Interfaith Community Organization (ICO), and GRACO Community Organization (GRACO) – filed a lawsuit in federal district court on behalf of Jersey City residents. PPG twice tried unsuccessfully to have the lawsuit dismissed and was refused both times by the court.

“After decades of foot dragging, we now know this cleanup is going to happen, and it's going to happen right,” said NRDC Senior Attorney Nancy Marks in a release issued Tuesday. “What could have been a Swiss cheese approach to the cleanup is now a comprehensive removal of the contamination – no holes to be found. This Jersey City community should never have been stuck living on top of someone else's toxic waste in the first place. They're finally receiving the justice they deserve and will be soon free from this poisonous legacy.”

The settlement ensures the cleanup will reduce chromium levels to 5 parts per million (ppm), which reflects the best available science about the health effects of exposure to the chemical and is much more stringent than the state's enforceable limit of 20 ppm. PPG will also test residential properties near the Garfield Avenue site upon request and clean up any contaminated properties to the 5ppm level. Since this agreement was

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reached in federal court, it also includes binding deadlines that cannot be delayed by the state.

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