

I attended the Motiva "Community Forum" held on August 5 in Delaware City. Also present from the Sierra Club was Wayne Manrakhm and his wife.

The company provided copies of the Amended Consent Decree, just released by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. This document spells out the requirement that Motiva must install wet gas scrubbers designed to remove sulfur compounds "in any usable form." The emission levels of SO<sub>2</sub> are to be reduced by 52 million pounds per year. The nitrogen oxides are to be reduced about 500,000 pounds per year. The total particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) is to be reduced by about 1.75 million pounds per year.

The bad news is that the deadline for completion has been pushed back two years, to Dec. 31, 2006. The document is complex and appears to provide lots of "wiggle room" for Motiva. We continue to come to grips with some of the wording.

Only three days later, on Aug. 8, Motiva had a major release of sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide. Two sulfur recovery units failed and the sulfur rich gas streams were sent to open-burning flares which released the SO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>S gas mixture into the air. The nasty odor quickly spread over northeast New Castle County.

It was amazing that the estimated 78 tons of SO<sub>2</sub> was not detected by the four air monitoring stations in the area run by the state of Delaware. Were they turned off to save money? How sensitive are they and when were they last calibrated?

As a chemist, I am quite familiar with SO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>S. The SO<sub>2</sub> is a sharp irritant to the mucous membranes. The H<sub>2</sub>S has the odor of rotten eggs.

At low-exposures it can cause headaches. At higher concentrations it is very toxic. Young children and elderly people are at a higher risk.

DNREC has issued a criminal misdemeanor citation to Motiva and they could be fined up to \$500, hardly pocket change for this refinery. In fact, I suspect they paid more than that for the apology published on August 13 in the News Journal.

I represent the Sierra Club on Motiva's Citizens Advisory Panel. To say that I am exasperated is an understatement! While I realize that this refinery produces gasoline, propane, heating oil and other necessary products, they also must do more than provide jobs and pay taxes. They must not damage the environment where our citizens live.

Our efforts continue with Motiva. I'll become a member of the Advisory Committee that Motiva is organizing, while Lori Fencer will replace me on the Community Advisory Panel. On September 3rd we shall attend the DNREX hearing to challenge a Motiva request to increase emissions. We are also drafting letters to the EPA asking that Motiva be held to the original consent decree of March, 2001.

It is sobering how much time, energy, and money it takes to fight just this one battle.

**"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."**

*.....Margaret Mead*

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