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LOCAL AREA RESIDENT IMPRESSIONS OF DECEMBER 8TH R.A.M.P. MEETING

In context, the December 8th meeting was novel to the area residents and my office and staff extended every effort to advertise that the meeting was to inform the area concerned residents of briefly what the problem was in the time period from 1976 to 1982

The main goal of this superfund meeting was to listen to the residents of the area and to the credit of all area state, local elected and appointed officials, they asked for no preferred treatment and were not given priority over anyone. The presence of the audience was in excess of what I expected and I believe in excess of what E.P.A. expected as over 30 percent of those present had no handout material available.

The knowledge and in-depth perception of the seriousness of this contamination problem was well documented by the testimony of several speakers as the records of the meeting will reflect.

The public's fear and apprehensions were evident by their questions to the panel.

All of us in attendance, I believe, experienced the pain and trauma of the speakers who were directly detrimentally impacted and spoke emotionally of their experience.

Their fear of the unknown also came across openly, however emotional their testimony, no one was overly reactive or abusive to the audience or the panel.

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On the average, the audience welcomed the meeting, especially by its title, R.A.M.P. Upon further reflections regarding the statement made by the chairperson relative to the 44 month remedial plan, the atmosphere assumed that of an eclipse in the room- the sun had disappeared and many of the people in the audience were stunned in shocked silence. In fact, many of the comments I received concerning the meeting several days later revolved around this issue, the time factor:

It was evident to me that the citizens in attendance were appreciative of the broad knowledge and expertise of the panelists. This aspect elevated and restored some degree of public respect and confidence in federal and state government. The people in the audience have had little support or compassion extended to them by local government and especially the Chamber of Commerce.

The main negative aspect emanating from the December 8th meeting was the statement made by Mr. Cliff Tuttle when he repeatedly told me and other persons who went outside the meeting room that he could discharge P.C.B.'s in the estuary anytime he wanted to, even at present.

This remark obviously aggravated people at the meeting, and he further noted that he was advised by his attorney not to enter the meeting room. The only protection and assistance that the audience has is dependent on us, elected and appointed officials of government. The public cannot afford expensive, high cost attorneys.

In conclusion, most of the audience was impressed. They realized that this was only an informational meeting and are anxiously awaiting further developments.

I believe the public deserves accolades for their concern and their behavior. The panelists deserve commendation for the professional expertise and patience they displayed.

However, the main question remains in the minds of citizens; how long, how clean, and at what human costs.

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