

GUDE LANDFILL CONCERNED CITIZENS
15461 INDIANOLA DRIVE
DERWOOD, MD 20855

Testimony Before the Montgomery County Council
January 22, 2009

Good evening, my name is Julia Tillery.

Since County officials can't or won't tell you what's leaking at the Gude Landfill, we will. Cyanide, lead, mercury, benzene, and 24 other toxic substances are oozing from the landfill at levels so high, the EPA says they exceed the Maximum Contamination Limits--sometimes by TEN FOLD.

This came as quite a shock to us in the neighborhood. We just got the lab data.

Not the County. They've watched these lab results come in year, after year, after year. Local officials say it's O.K., as long as we don't drink it. You heard them say as much tonight. The creek near the landfill feeds Rock Creek; both are contaminated. Eventually, toxins flow into the Chesapeake, leaving our community. That's pollution control in Montgomery County Maryland. And that's why we went to the State, to get action.

We live next to a landfill with waste TEN Stories high, producing lots of landfill gas. The County captures some of the gas, but estimates that 40% of it---simply escapes.

Methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, these are things you do NOT want to inhale. The County is buying a two million-dollar engine to convert a small portion of gas into energy. We asked for scrubbers, and filters, because the engine will add dioxins and other particulates to the air we breathe. The County admits that, but won't buy scrubbers or filters, because, we were told, toxins in the gas won't damage the machinery. Our health? Not relevant.

The County needs to park 500 school buses, to clear space for a park for future residents, and Gude Landfill looks good. Our community has been waiting for a park at the landfill for decades. Instead, we could get pollution equivalent to 57-THOUSAND cars, that's according to the EPA, not the Internet. The emissions are heavier than air; they'll roll right down the hill, and right into our homes.

What about the methane? Experts tell us it turns buses into sources of ignition. That's from the University of Maryland, not the Internet.



Signs at the gate of the Gude Landfill

What about all the chemicals? Is each bus going to be decontaminated as it leaves the landfill? Or is someone going to tell parents cyanide at ten times the limit is O.K.?

One official tells us the County will do something with the toxic hazards, WHEN IT BUILDS a bus depot. That is not acceptable.

In the last few weeks, most of you have seen the feasibility study that had been kept quiet. It says “the County should look elsewhere” because it would be far too costly, and there are far too many problems at the Gude Landfill. The State of Maryland warns that developing the landfill could make a bad situation, WORSE. That is not acceptable.

We don't need another study, to tell us what the first study makes very clear. And we don't need to waste more money on a terribly ill-conceived idea.

What we do need, is for our public officials to take a stand, and take action to protect us from the toxic waste NOW. We need a clear demonstration that Montgomery County puts our health and safety first.