

North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Division of Waste Management

Pat McCrory Governor Dexter R. Matthews Director

John E. Skvarla, III Secretary

June 27, 2013

RE: Dry-Cleaning Solvent Contamination Assessment Site 60-0019

Dear Resident:

The Division of Waste Management in cooperation with the property owner, Highland Mill Landlord, LLC, is conducting an environmental assessment of the former Cunningham Cleaners previously located in the Highland Park Mill Center. Cunningham Cleaners operated from 1995 until 1999, using a dry-cleaning solvent commonly known as "perc" (tetrachloroethene or PCE). Perc and its breakdown products have been found in the soil and groundwater at the location of the former dry-cleaner, and more recently, in the groundwater and soil gas beneath portions of the Highland Mill Lofts. *It is important to note that Highland Mill Lofts receives drinking water from the municipal water supply, not from groundwater discussed in this letter.*

Since our assessment has revealed the presence of groundwater and soil gas contamination in and around Highland Mill Lofts, we want to make you aware of the activities underway and let you know who you can contact if you have questions and how you can assist in our efforts.

Project Work to Date:

The initial assessment of the groundwater and soil contamination has been completed. Two sampling events were conducted to evaluate the potential for vapors from the impacted soil and groundwater to affect indoor air quality in the nearby loft apartments (commonly referred to as "vapor intrusion"). Samples of soil gas were taken from points around the apartment building and analyzed by a qualified laboratory.

Project Work to be Completed:

Additional groundwater testing will be performed to better understand if and how far the groundwater contamination has migrated. Based on the results of soil gas sampling, we will seek permission from a number of tenants to allow us to collect indoor air samples. If dry-cleaning-related constituents are detected in the indoor air at levels that require mitigation, the division will take immediate steps to correct the problem. All direct costs of any required sampling or mitigation will be paid for by the division.

The division will hold an information session for the residents of the Highland Mill Lofts to further discuss the sampling plan and answer questions on Wednesday July 10, 2013, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the atrium.

How you can help:

If you have questions, please contact us (see contact information below). Our goal is to communicate clearly and make decisions based on sound science. We will continue to provide the community with information to help everyone understand any risks that are present. To help us assess any potential risks, we ask for residence cooperation if we seek permission to collect groundwater, soil vapor and air samples from your apartment. Access to those apartments that we request to sample is very important in understanding where contamination may exist and in determining any potential risks. *Once again, please understand that based on current information, all residents in your area receive their drinking water from the municipal water supply, not from groundwater discussed in this letter.*

Contact information:

If you would like further information about the site activities or the risks associated with any of the contaminants being addressed, please contact Scott Stupak, Project Manager for the DSCA Program, at (919)707-8359 or by email at Scott.Stupak@ncdenr.gov. Attached is an EPA fact sheet which helps answer some common questions about vapor intrusion.

Sincerely,

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Scott Stupak DSCA Project Manager



What You Should Know About Vapor Intrusion

EPA has developed this fact sheet to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about an important health issue called vapor intrusion. Vapors and gases from contaminated groundwater and soil have the potential to seep into indoor spaces and cause health problems.

What is vapor intrusion?

When chemicals or petroleum products are spilled on the ground or leak from underground storage tanks, they can give off gases, or vapors that can get inside buildings. Common products that can cause vapor intrusion are gasoline or diesel fuel, dry cleaning solvents and industrial de-greasers. The vapors move through the soil and seep through cracks in basements, foundations, sewer lines and other openings. Vapor intrusion is a concern because vapors can build up to a point where the health of residents or workers in those buildings could be at risk. Some vapors such as those associated with petroleum products have a gasoline odor, others are odor-free.

Vapor Intrusion into Indoor Air



Can vapors in my home come from household sources?

Common household products can be a source of indoor air problems. Vapors and gases can come from: paints; paint strippers or thinners; moth balls; new carpeting and furniture; stored fuel; air fresheners; cleaning products; dry cleaned clothing and even cigarette smoke.

What are the health concerns related to vapor intrusion?

When vapor intrusion does occur, the health risk will vary based on the type of chemicals, the levels of the chemical found, the length of exposure and the health of exposed individuals. Some people may experience eye and respiratory irritation, headaches and/or nausea. These symptoms are temporary and should go away when the vapors are addressed. Low-level chemical exposures over many years may raise the lifetime risk of cancer or chronic disease.

How is vapor intrusion discovered?

Samples of gas in the soil or groundwater are first collected near a contaminated site. If no contamination is found near a site, then vapor intrusion should not be a problem. If contamination is found, depending on the type, the search may be widened to include samples closer to or on individual properties. The next step is to take vapor samples from the soil under the home's foundation; these are called slab, or sub-slab samples. EPA does not generally recommend indoor air sampling before slab or sub-slab sampling, because indoor air quality varies widely day to day. Also, household products may interfere with sampling results.

What happens if a problem is found?

The most common solution is to install systems often used to reduce naturally occurring radon that seeps into homes in some geographic areas. These systems, called radon mitigation systems, remove soil vapors from below basements or foundations before they enter homes. Vapors are vented outside of the homes where they become dispersed and harmless. These systems use minimal electricity and do not affect heating and cooling efficiency. They also prevent radon from entering homes – an added health benefit especially in radon prone areas. Once the source of the vapors is eliminated, the systems should no longer be needed.



Vapor Intrusion: Tightly seal common household products after use and seal them in an area that is well ventilated to avoid the release of vapors

What can I do to improve indoor air quality?

- Don't buy more chemicals than you need.
- Store unused chemicals in appropriate tightly-sealed containers.
- Don't make your home too air tight. Fresh air helps prevent chemical build-up and mold growth.
- Fix all leaks promptly, as well as other moisture problems that encourage mold.
- Check all appliances and fireplaces annually.
- Test your home for radon. Test kits are available at hardware and home improvement stores or you can call the Radon Hotline at 800-458-1158 in New York State, or 800-648-0394 in New Jersey.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home. They are available at hardware and home improvement stores.



Sub-slab mitigation system: This system draws radon and other vapors out of the soil and vents them outside

For more information:

- For health related questions regarding vapor intrusion, contact your local health department or the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at: 1-888-422-8737 or visit their Web site at www.atdsr.cdc.gov
- For more detailed information on EPA's vapor intrusion sampling, visit the EPA's Web site at: www.epa.gov/correctiveaction/eis/vapor/guidance.pdf
- For more information on indoor air quality, visit EPA's Web site at: <u>www.epa.gov/air/topics/comoria.html</u> or call the indoor air Quality Information hotline at 1-800-438-4318