

Dow Chemical and Greenpeace: Timeline of Key Events

Summer 1991: Greenpeace launches a 40-city boat tour of the Great Lakes with a new report, "The Product is the Poison: The Case for a Chlorine Phase-Out." Dow has initiated a "top-down reorganization of resources to deal with chlorine-related issues," according to a company newsletter.

1992: The U.S.-Canadian International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes recommends that both governments, "in consultation with industry and other affected interests, develop timetables to sunset the use of chlorine and chlorine-containing compounds as industrial feedstocks." A year later, the American Public Health Association unanimously passes resolution #9303, recognizing the health and environmental problems caused by the industrial use of chlorine.

1992: The Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) forms the Chlorine Chemistry Council (CCC), whose first managing director, Brad Lienhardt, is a career-long Dow employee. CCC begins a multi-million-dollar public relations and legislative campaign to resist public health and environmental campaigns to reduce chlorine use.

1992: After EPA Administrator Carol Browner announces (February 1) that EPA will examine ways to "substitute, reduce or prohibit the use of chlorine and chlorinated compounds," CCC and member companies (including Dow) mount a campaign against EPA's proposal, suggesting that EPA's proposal "declare(s) war on modern society." The Clinton Administration soon overrides EPA and withdraws the proposal.

1995: CCC hires Mongoven, Biscoe and Duchin (MBD), a public relations firm. MBD hires people to attend activists' meetings (without identifying whom they are representing), and to take notes and make recordings.

1996 to 1999: Greenpeace publishes numerous reports identifying the link between dioxin and vinyl chloride, a chemical produced by Dow at its Plaquemine, LA facility and its Freeport, TX facility.

1996: Greenpeace begins campaigning against genetically engineered foods in the U.S.

May, 1996: Greenpeace publishes “Dow Brand Dioxin: Dow Makes You Poison Great Things,” a report that identifies Dow as the “world’s largest root-source of dioxin,” and reviews Dow’s manipulation of science and regulations related to dioxin and chlorine.

1997: Researcher Fred vom Saal shows that bisphenol-A, a component of polycarbonate plastic (a Dow product), can alter the reproductive development of lab mice at extremely low doses, one of many studies indicating weaknesses in current regulatory standards. Vom Saal later tells PBS Frontline producers: “Dow Chemical sent a representative down to my lab...and essentially asked if there were a mutually beneficial outcome that we could arrive at where I held off publishing the information about this chemical until they had repeated my studies, and after repeating my studies approval for publication was received by all the plastic manufacturers.” Vom Saal rebuffs Dow’s offer. He is later a BBI surveillance target.

January, 1998: BBI begins meeting with representatives from the Chemical Manufacturers Association.

September 8, 1998: Dow announces its intention “to use biotechnology as a key platform to accelerate Dow’s growth.”

March 12, 1999: Representatives from Ketchum Communications (a public relations firm), Dow and BBI meet to discuss a new “WDC project.” Subsequent meetings involving BBI, Ketchum and Dow lead to the formation of a “global trends tracking” network, whose job is to gather intelligence about Greenpeace and other groups, analyze it, and use it to generate weekly and quarterly reports for Ketchum and Dow. During this time, BBI conducts regular “d-lines” (i.e. steals documents) at Greenpeace’s Washington, DC office. It also subcontracts with Netsafe, a computer security firm comprised of former NSA employees.

June, 1999: Greenpeace recommends that chemical companies claiming their plants were vulnerable to terrorist attacks should register with the government and take steps to reduce hazards (through the production and use of inherently safer chemicals), improve site security, and establish buffer zones.

February 6, 2001: Dow completes its merger with Union Carbide, the company responsible for the Bhopal, India disaster. Greenpeace and other

groups join in solidarity with the victims of Bhopal to demand that Dow clean up the still-contaminated site and compensate victims of the worst chemical disaster in history, and their families.

March, 2001: Dow and the chemical industry convince government regulators to restrict photocopying and internet publication of worst-case accident scenarios that were already published.

2002: In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks Greenpeace starts campaigning to prevent the catastrophic threats from chlorine storage at chemical plants around the country. Greenpeace and the Working Group on Community Right to Know release previously unpublished catastrophic chemical accident scenarios prepared by 50 chemical companies in Louisiana, including Dow Chemical's Plaquemine vinyl chloride facility.

2006: Congress passes a very weak temporary chemical security law, written with the help of industry lobbyists and prohibiting the government from requiring the use of safer chemical processes. The law is supported by Dow Chemical and other industry giants that want the weak standards to be made permanent.

2009: The House of Representatives approves the "Chemical and Water Security Act," (H.R. 2868) by a vote of 230-193, the first comprehensive chemical security bill passed since 9/11 by either body of Congress. Dow is a member of the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and other groups that lobbied against the bill.

2009: After showing Greenpeace legislative language indicating the company could support a policy requiring safer chemical processes, Dow instead continues to support legislation that would restrict the Department of Homeland Security from requiring the use of safer chemical processes.

September, 2010 : Greenpeace conducts a security inspection at Dow's Freeport, Texas, facility, which (according to Dow's own reports to EPA) puts 130,000 people at risk of lethal exposure to phosgene or chlorine during a catastrophic release. In total, eight Dow Chemical plants across the country put over 3 million people at risk, according to the company's own Risk Management Plans (RMP) submitted to EPA.