

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G

Racial and Social Equity Standing Committee

November 13, 2023

Commissioners - ANC 3/4G
5601 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

Dear Commissioners,

The Racial and Social Equity Committee (RASE) is calling on the Commissioners of ANC 3/4G to address an issue of grave injustice and inequity that is plaguing the community of Ivy City, NE, Washington, DC. **NEP's chemical plant located in the neighborhood is emitting harmful chemicals, severely impacting residents' health and the environment.** RASE stands with the residents of Ivy City in demanding the immediate closure and removal of NEP.

Ivy City was founded as a predominantly African American post-Civil War subdivision in 1873. Development was slow and railroad and industrial activities moved in. Since the 1930s, this historically low-income community of color has been burdened with the social and environmental injustice and inequities from living near toxic industry. Established in Ivy City in 1934, NEP produces military-grade adhesives from harmful chemicals such as formaldehyde and cresol. RASE has learned that the residents experience health problems such as nausea, asthma, headaches, loss of smell, and learning disabilities due to the activities of NEP. Residents live in fear that their children are inhaling toxins and cancer-causing substances, yet regulatory agencies have ignored them. RASE has been informed of these problems by way of the ANCs, letters, videos, audit documentation on the web, news articles, and in-person visits to Ivy City.

The mission of RASE is: To raise awareness about the ongoing effects of historical and systemic racism in our community and city and promote change in pursuit of racial justice, diversity, and equity. The committee seeks to address concrete issues which affect people in their daily lives such as the discriminatory practices affecting Ivy City. In this same vein, RASE met in 2021 with the Executive Director of Empower DC regarding the DC City Council's plans to build a bus barn in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Brentwood, NE, another community already heavily degraded by pollution and industry.

The Ivy City neighborhood has submitted multiple complaints and demanded engagement with the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA). Despite audits and problems flagged (see Tetra Tech attachment), the odor continues to be a nuisance to the point where residents say they are uncomfortable sitting outside due to the strong smell of burning tar coming from the chemicals (see Safety Data attachment for copaltite).

Bad air in Ivy City is obviously a deterrent to attracting new business. NEP, however, continues its full operations. The company's business philosophy posted on its sparse website emphasizes "quality" and states: "We strive to be as efficient as possible so we can offer a competitive price to our customers." It is striking that the primary customer of NEP is the United States Navy. Not only is NEP prioritizing profit over the mental and physical health of its neighbors - some of whom are children who actually share an abutting wall with the facility - but the US military is willfully fueling NEP's activities. This neglect is shocking and unacceptable. Not only should NEP be forced to close immediately, but financial remediation should be provided to Ivy City.

It should never have been the burden of a community to have to fight Jim Crow era practices, much less to not breathe foul-smelling, toxic air in its own neighborhood.

As such, RASE requests that the ANC 3/4G prepare a resolution recommending the immediate closure and removal of National Chemical Products, Inc. The committee also requests the ANC to consider advocating for the facility's closure during FY24 Budget Oversight hearings.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Martin
Co-Chair, Racial and Social Equity
Standing Committee



Karrenthya Simmons
Co-Chair, Racial and Social Equity
Standing Committee

References:

Resolution from ANC 5D: <https://1drv.ms/w/s!AvxZdKleY92-hWAlBeywAsBSMeTK>

Ivy City Rising Community Organizer video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTWTtTNd5TI>

Video of July 2023 Shut Down NEP: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Eiz08g-W2Js>

Principles of Environmental Justice: <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

Website for NEP: <http://www.nationalengineeringproducts.com/index.html>

Tetra Tech, Inc.'s evaluation of a completed air survey at the NEP facility: https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/d DOE/release_content/attachments/National%20Engineering%20Products%20Nepseal%20Air%20Survey%20Report2023.pdf

Safety data for copaltite: <https://www.copaltite.com/pub/media/amasty/amfile/attach/9kzCrclK82OFAI8JdODrp7X8scpBtmSi.pdf>

Washington Informer Article: <https://www.washingtoninformer.com/they-need-to-go-ivy-city-neighbors-demand-chemical-plant-shut-down/>

DCist Article: <https://dcist.com/story/23/07/27/ivy-city-shut-down-chemical-plant/>

cc: ANC 3/4G Commissioners
ANC 3/4G Office
ANC 3/4G Racial and Social Equity Standing Committee