



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Delaware Riverkeeper Network Statement Regarding River Chemical Spill**

**Bristol, PA:** The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, whose main office is located in Bristol, PA remains concerned about the potential impacts of the March 24, 2023 release of acrylic latex polymer from a chemical processing plant into Otter Creek, a direct tributary to the Delaware River. The release, which began at approximately 11:30 pm from the Trinseo Altuglas Facility in Bristol, PA, resulted in what is believed to be a discharge of approximately 8,100 gallons, (but according to the U.S. Coast Guard could be as high as 12,000 gallons). According to official reports, drinking water supplies drawn from the Delaware River do not appear to have been contaminated, but one report encouraged folks to drink bottled water if they were concerned.

“It is always a concern when there is a spill of chemicals or hazardous materials to our River system. Once a chemical is released, the flow of the water, including the tidal effects of the estuary reach of the river, can carry the impacts significant distances. It is important that people remain vigilant and if they see, smell, or witness concerning impacts to the River, fish, or wildlife that they immediately report it. There were numerous reports on social media that something was wrong in the period after the spill. It was disappointing that we did not see our state and federal agencies releasing emergency notification phone numbers or holding live press reports to help share information in real time. The public is worried and has a right and need to know what is going on when there is a hazardous release. Stagnant press reports that state there have been no reports of impacts to fish or wildlife without giving out the number to which eyewitness reports can be made is not enough; people need to be informed. Press and organizations like mine that work with communities along the River need to be able to receive answers to our questions during live press events. And the agencies should take advantage of eyewitness accounts and our organization’s ability to inform, alert, and mobilize others for information gathering by providing a pathway for us to share that information,” **says Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.** “The Delaware Riverkeeper Network has always been a value added resource to share and gather information, and when necessary to help inform communities how they can be of assistance, including by reporting events witnessed, but also by encouraging people to stay away from cleanup efforts and danger zones. It is disappointing that we were left out of the loop on this spill to our region until we started our own efforts to seek and secure information. This was a missed opportunity for the agencies to both share information with and secure information from the public,” van Rossum adds.

Clean up efforts have been ongoing all weekend and so far have resulted in 60,000 gallons of contaminated water collected, with efforts focused on “removing product from the storm drain system and outflow located on Mill Creek” according to official reports. Given that the Otter Creek meets the Delaware where the River is tidal, will

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lengthen the reaches of the River that could be impacted and the length of time the chemicals linger in the river system.

“While there have not been reports of impacts to fish, aquatic life or wildlife, when a spill of this nature happens it is always important for people to remain vigilant should they see anything of concern, and to report it immediately to the National Response Center’s Emergency Report Line 1-800-424-8802. After making an official report to the hotline, it is helpful if people can also notify the Delaware Riverkeeper Network so we can help ensure due attention is given to critical and time sensitive reports – the Delaware Riverkeeper Network hotline is 1-800-8-DELAWARE (1-800-833-5292) or via email to [keeper@delawariverkeeper.org](mailto:keeper@delawariverkeeper.org),” adds van Rossum.

A map showing the potential zone of impact was released by the Philadelphia Water Department and can be found here: <https://phillyh2o.info/spill-map>.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is the only environmental advocacy organization working to protect the entire Delaware River system, including the mainstem, tributaries and its watershed. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network has often served as an important partner, helping to mobilize and guide community volunteerism when and however appropriate in the wake of catastrophic spill events including oil spills, chemical spills and other catastrophes for our Delaware River system. For more information on the organization see [www.DelawareRiverkeeper.org](http://www.DelawareRiverkeeper.org) .

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