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Delaware Riverkeeper Network files suit against Gloucester County soil recycling operation

Logan Township, NJ – On March 3, 2014, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) filed a law suit against Soil Safe, Inc., for violations of their Class B recycling permit and for contributing to an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health and the environment.

The DRN complaint states that Soil Safe has unlawfully handled, stored and disposed of contaminated soil at the Soil Safe Facility, as well as at the nearby Logan Equine Park, also known as DREAM Park, located at U.S. Route 130 South, Logan Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey.

“The contaminated soils being processed at Soil Safe contain levels of arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, lead, nickel, zinc, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and total PCBs” states Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper. “Soil Safe accepts soil from contaminated properties in several states, including over 300,000 tons of soil removed from the Newtown Creek Superfund Site in New York City” states van Rossum.

“Exposure to PAHs, including benzo(a)pyrene, can cause serious health problems due to the fact that most PAHs contain benzene, a highly carcinogenic substance” added van Rossum. Additionally, PAHs are absorbed by and bioaccumulate in fish, crustaceans, and mollusks.

Soil Safe mixes additives that are purported to “microencapsulates” or lock-in the contaminants in the soil. Van Rossum states that “our research indicates that Soil Safe microencapsulation process is not working as reported – if at all.” “The Park is a busy place in the summer with recreational and competitive horses riding, Cub Scout camping weekends and many other activities. To have those park users and area residents exposed is just unacceptable.”

The lawsuit further states that Soil Safe is placing substantially more contaminated soil at its facility than their permit allows. “In 2003, the company told NJDEP that they would require about one million tons of fill and take 5 to 7 years. It appears that Soil Safe has placed over 3.5 million tons of processed soil on the property” stated van Rossum. Further indication of permit violations include that, despite NJDEP’s clear statement that the cap should consist of just five feet of material, the average height of material at the site is nearly 19 feet.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network seeks the courts to stop Safe Soil's operation until they conform to its permit conditions, remediate any contamination it has placed on any of the sites and determination is made that it's processing and placement processes are effective and safe to residents and the environment.

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