



Press Releases

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Governor, Attorney General Announce Settlement with Velsicol Chemical Company

Consent Decree Requires Site Cleanup and \$200,000 Payment

BALTIMORE, MD (July 8, 2008)—Governor Martin O'Malley and Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler today announced the settlement of a lawsuit against Velsicol Chemical Company. The complaint, filed last November in the Circuit Court for Kent County, alleged violations of the State's water pollution control and hazardous substance control laws based on current practices and historical groundwater contamination at Velsicol's Chestertown, Maryland facility.

The consent decree requires Velsicol to investigate and clean up contaminated soil and groundwater at the facility, to evaluate and make improvements to its current wastewater treatment system and to pay \$200,000 into the Maryland Clean Water Fund. In addition to requiring site investigation and clean-up of pollution related to historical discharges, the decree directs Velsicol to perform enhanced monitoring of its process wastewater and stormwater discharges and to evaluate and take steps to reduce phosphorus in its process wastewater.

"Enforcing laws designed to protect Marylanders from contaminated groundwater is critical to prevent future occurrences, said Governor Martin O'Malley. We have made real and steady progress to protect the natural resources we share, and the settlement announced today should serve as a reminder that all Maryland citizens, including our corporations, play a role in protecting our environment."

"Pollution into the Chester River from the Velsicol site has been an ongoing problem for many years," said Attorney General Gansler. "I applaud the strong advocacy of the Chester River Association for bringing our attention to this significant environmental matter. It is my hope that their actions set an example for others to be a strong voice in our efforts to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay."

Velsicol purchased the chemical manufacturing plant in 1994 from Nuodex, Inc. Prior to Velsicol's ownership and dating back to the 1950s, the facility used a series of unlined impoundments as a means of treating process wastewater. That wastewater leached through the soil and into groundwater, carrying pollutants, including the plasticizer bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate or "BEHP."

Velsicol and its predecessors have undertaken actions in the past to monitor and remediate groundwater and soil contamination on parts of the site. Past practices of wastewater disposal have been replaced with more modern treatment systems that result in a highly regulated surface water discharge. MDE's lawsuit was prompted by Velsicol's failure to complete the clean up to applicable environmental standards and bolstered by information reported by the Chester River Association (CRA) suggesting that further investigation was needed to determine if contaminants had migrated off-site and into surface waters.

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