

TEXANS UNITED



**For Immediate Release
April 13, 1990**

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Petition for Criminal Investigation and Prosecution to be filed Against Formosa Plastics Plant

On Friday April 13 representatives from Texans United, Calhoun County Resources Watch and others petitioned the Texas Water Commission and Environmental Protection Agency to investigate past and current criminal violations of environmental laws and to prosecute appropriate managers and corporate officers of Formosa Plastics Corporation.

According to the petition, criminal investigation and prosecution is called for because the company had failed to notify the government of frequently occurring accidents, intentional toxic dumping, illegal hazardous waste practices, and chronic and intentional water pollution.

On March 29 Texans United released a report, The Formosa Plastics Story, Report of Environmental Investigation, which documented Formosa's history of serious violations. On April 5, 1990 the Texas Water Commission staff recommended a record \$244,700 pollution penalty against the company for wastewater violations. According to Rick Abraham, Director of Texans United, "These fines are a drop in the bucket compared to what companies can make by avoiding environmental laws. When corporate managers and officers begin to face fines and jail terms you can bet they'll have a little more respect for the law."

Texans United also released its analysis of water and soil tests at an unpermitted discharge point from the Formosa plant which drained through a roadside park. Analysis of the sample indicated concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbons 1000 to 10,000 times above normal background levels. The sample was taken the same day Formosa officials told a public meeting of their commitment to "meet and exceed any standards the state and federal agencies require."

The controversial Formosa plant is proposing a massive \$1.3 billion expansion of its operations in Port Comfort, Texas. According to Dianne Wilson, President of Calhoun County Resources Watch, "We may need jobs in the area but we don't need more pollution to threaten our health and our seafood industry. Formosa has a horrible history of polluting the environment and we are worried about the future."

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OFFICES ALSO IN AUSTIN, LEVELLAND, DALLAS

TEXANS UNITED



To the Editor
Port Lavaca Wave
Box 88
Port Lavaca, Texas 77979

November 30, 1990

Dear Editor,

On November 16, 1990, the Port Lavaca Wave ran a story by reporter Sally Spenser questioning the validity of the petition signatures gathered by Texans United and the Calhoun County Resources Watch calling for an Environmental Impact Statement on the new Formosa Plastics Plant.

We admit that our volunteers and staff made some mistakes in photocopying and assembling the stack of petition signatures. We appreciate the mistake being pointed out. And we would have appreciated a call from the Wave allowing us to correct the mistake before printing the story. But no attempt was made to contact us for any clarification prior to publication. For anyone to interperate this mistake as an attempt to deceive is absurd. And for The Wave to discount other pertinent facts about the petitions was irresponsible journalism.

The Wave says that the number of signatures was "less than reported," that some of the names were "duplications," and that "only around 1,829 signatures" were presented.

The Wave story, however slanted, helps us prove the error of Formosa's claim, that "no more than 10 people in Calhoun County" oppose the plant's pollution record. We wonder why the Wave didn't publish a similar story exposing Formosa's false claim?

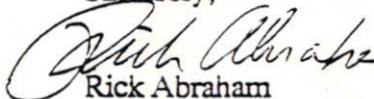
The Wave mentioned that some of the signatures presented to Formosa were "blacked out and couldn't be read." But The Wave failed to mention that we explained in advance that the "black outs" were required to protect the identity of Formosa employees who feared company retaliation for signing. And The Wave failed to mention that the same petitions- without the black outs- had been shown to the press at the news conference they attended in front of the plant.

We may have miscounted, but The Wave missed the point! The petitions and the signatures themselves are absolutely valid! A full 80% of the Calhoun County residents we spoke to on Nov. 10 & 11 signed the petition calling for an Environmental Impact Statement and a clean-up of existing pollution by Formosa.

The people of Calhoun County deserve accurate information from citizens' groups like ours, and we apologize for our honest mistake. They also deserve good investigative reporting to look into the claims of Formosa, not just the claims of citizens' groups who question Formosa. The public is not served by "news coverage" that seems to come straight from Formosa's public relations department.

We hope you will have the journalistic integrity to publish this Letter to the Editor. But just to make sure, we are mailing this letter to our members in Calhoun County, to every person in the county who signed our petition, and to other readers and advertisers of The Wave. Your paper's slanted coverage of this important issue has strengthened our resolve to fight for an Environmental Impact Statement and to see that Formosa is held accountable for its crimes.

Sincerely,


Rick Abraham

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