

Bill Pascrell, Representing the 8th Congressional District of New Jersey

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For Immediate Release
January 29, 2009

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PASCRELL REQUESTS ATTORNEY GENERAL EXAMINE ABANDONED CLIFTON CHEMICAL FACILITY

WASHINGTON—Days after touring the abandoned Abrachem Chemical facility in the City of Clifton, U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ-08) today requested that New Jersey Attorney General Anne Milgram examine the company's action to leave behind thousands of barrels of improperly stored, potentially dangerous chemicals in Clifton for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to remove.

A copy of the letter follows and is attached in a portable document format.

The Honorable Anne Milgram
Attorney General
State of New Jersey
P.O. Box 080
Trenton, NJ 08625-0080

Dear Attorney General Milgram:

I am writing to direct your attention to a federal cleanup effort initiated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Monday, January 26, 2009 in the City of Clifton at the former Abrachem Chemical facility.

After being denied access by Abrachem operators to investigate a facility that was reportedly leaking chemicals, the EPA secured an access warrant through a federal Magistrate on January 8, 2009. A preliminary investigation has revealed that Abrachem had used the facility to improperly store thousands of drums filled with unknown chemicals. The initial report also revealed leakage and mislabeled barrels.

Abrachem has recently vacated the Clifton site and established two new locations. One is in Belleville Township, which is part of my congressional district and the other is in Kearney. With a long record of public safety, occupational and environmental violations, I am concerned by Abrachem's history and will closely monitor the company's operations.

Specifically, I am writing to bring to your attention the approximately 1,500 barrels of improperly stored chemicals that Abrachem recklessly left behind at the Clifton facility it recently vacated. By failing to properly dispose of the chemicals, Abrachem has compromised Clifton's public safety, threatened the region's environmental health and unjustly stuck taxpayers with the bill to conduct a clean up.

Having recently visited the Abrachem site in Clifton and having met with EPA officials and local first responders, I am confident that we have the right people in place to remediate the site as safely and quickly as possible.

But it is troubling that while Abrachem works to turn a profit in neighboring communities, the EPA and local first responders are busy cleaning up the mess that Abrachem left behind.

Abrachem has been a bad tenant, an irresponsible neighbor and an unscrupulous polluter. I am a strong believer in "polluter pays principles" and respectfully request your office examine the situation at the Abrachem Chemical facility in Clifton.

Thank you for your consideration and your longstanding leadership in protecting the people of New Jersey and our environment. I would further ask that you please keep me apprised of any action you take regarding the situation outlined above.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Member of Congress

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