



## Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Inc.

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### *Alba Injection Well* *How Did We Get Here?*

Cement kiln dust (CKD) when mixed with water becomes leachate, a toxic bleach-like soup. It burns skin, kills fish (and all else in its path), and releases large amounts of heavy metals such as mercury, arsenic, and lead.

The Penn Dixie cement plant closed down in 1980, leaving behind huge piles of CKD along the shore of Lake Michigan. The DNR ordered that those piles be capped or removed prior to new development of the property. This is standard procedure and would have been relatively easy and inexpensive then; but it wasn't done.

Gov. Engler took office in 1991. CKD was changed from a hazardous to a non-hazardous waste, a designation which enabled the new property owners to build the multimillion dollar Bay Harbor Resort without a cleanup. In 1995 the Bay Harbor developers (CMS, David Johnson and Boyne USA), and the DNR entered into a covenant not to sue should problems arise. The CKD piles were bulldozed into quarries and spread on the ground to build roads and a golf course.

Problems did arise. As ground and surface water flowed through the CKD it formed poisonous leachate that flowed into Little Traverse Bay. Dead fish and swimmers with burned skin and ear infections resulted, forcing the Northwest Michigan Health Department to close several miles of beach at East Park in 2004. In 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ordered CMS to "isolate, contain, or remove" the CKD to prevent further contamination of the Bay. Again that order was ignored in favor of a "less expensive" alternative - allow the groundwater to become contaminated, then transport it far away to Alba, the highest point in Northern Michigan and headwaters to six great river watersheds.

Instead of a proper clean up CMS wants to protect the golf course, leave the CKD in place at East Park, and create a second potential pollution disaster in Alba. Its time to demand that the CKD be cleaned up at its source and stop

endangering the health of our citizens, our pristine rivers, Lake Michigan, and our tourism economy.

## **Why This Is A Bad Idea**

**1) The headwaters for the Jordan, Manistee and Thunder Bay Rivers originate in the Alba area. Six different watersheds converge at this point which is the highest elevation in lower Michigan.**

**\* Deep injection wells have historically had an 8% failure rate. Do we want to risk contamination of our pristine rivers and underground aquifers? Would our tourist-based economy survive such a catastrophe?**

**\* A deep injection well in Romulus, Michigan failed and leaked. The well operators vanished in 2006, leaving the community to clean up the mess. CMS has an abysmal environmental record - some 350 violations on record. Do we really want to trust them with our most precious natural resources?**

**\* A continental rift (fault line) runs through this area. In Ohio, deep injection wells caused a series of small earthquakes which fractured the rock containment layers, allowing the injected toxins to escape. Do we want to accept that risk here?**

**\* These wells can and do fail. And if the water in Alba and surrounding communities becomes poisoned the technology to fix the problem does not even exist.**

**2) A well in Alba does not solve the problem.**

**\* Only 3 - 8% of the leachate is currently being collected. Will more wells be needed to collect more leachate? Will other companies be able to buy into these wells to dump their waste?**

**\* Over one million gallons of toxic leachate still flows into Little Traverse Bay. The EPA order to "remove, isolate or contain" the CKD at the source would protect the groundwater headed for Lake Michigan, as well as the watersheds which converge in Alba and cover most of northern Michigan.**

**3) Approximately 135,000 gallons of leachate would be transported to Alba daily for at least 10 years.**

**\* This means 15-20 tanker truck loads of toxic waste traveling the county roads to the well every day.**

**\* Who will pay for the maintenance and increased wear and tear on the roads due to this increased use.**

**\* What would be the effects of an accident or toxic spill on surrounding communities and natural resources?**

**\* Since this represents on 3 - 8% of the total leachate at Bay Harbor, what if more is collected in the future, further increasing truck traffic?**

**4) Fix the problem at the source.**

**\* Don't take toxic waste from a luxury resort development and dump it in a community with far fewer resources.**

**\* What if the tables were reversed. If the toxic leachate had originated in Alba, would the Bay Harbor resort be willing to serve as a dump?**

**\* Don't create a second possible toxic waste clean up site.**

**5) Protect our water!**

**\* Join with Friends of the Jordan and Star Township to stop this well.**

**\* For more information , or to make a donation , please go to [www.friendsofthejordan.org](http://www.friendsofthejordan.org) or mail to P.O. Box 412, East Jordan, Michigan 49727.**