



# ***Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society***

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## **N-E-W-S R-E-L-E-A-S-E**

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### **STATE AND FEDS "RIG" NEW ASBESTOS AIR TESTING; COVER-UP**

State and federal officials are "cooking the books" on new testing being performed to evaluate asbestos exposure at Illinois Beach State Park. Visible asbestos debris that has appeared on the Park's shoreline beaches for decades; they are attempting to remove it once a week without any restriction on public access, but they leave the invisible fibers behind on the beaches. The public has been allowed in the 6 ½ miles of asbestos-contaminated beaches based upon flawed studies and public health assessments conducted under state supervision and blindly rubber-stamped by officials at the ATSDR/Centers for Disease Control who are continually covering up for their Illinois partners, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. With today's "rigged" air testing, the federal and state agencies are attempting to cover-up the unsupported statements found in past studies that allowed these polluted areas to be reopened to the public in 1998 after a so-called extensive clean-up attempt.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), with its consultant PSI, is currently conducting activity-based asbestos air tests to simulate potential asbestos exposure during typical beach activities. This "rigged" testing will actually misrepresent true public exposure to asbestos because the conditions and activities avoid "worst-case" asbestos disturbances.

- **Air tests should be conducted during the hot, dry months of July and August.** The testing is being performed this week following nine straight days of rain last week, which saturated the beach sands on cool, damp days. The beaches are still damp from the long winter.
- **Air tests should represent worst-case activities.** Planned activities include building sand castles near the surf, unfortunately, while it is wet or damp. The activities should measure what asbestos exposure would be when the sand castles dry and are kicked and demolished by children later in the day after it is dried, creating a higher risk of exposure. Cool, wet May weather is not beach weather.

- **Air tests avoid the most contaminated beach areas, and also avoid measuring asbestos fibers being taken home with park workers and the public.** The study only tests exposures in limited areas that are either outside of contaminated areas or in areas where new sand has diluted the amount of asbestos present, or when the lake has eroded the contaminated beach sand.
- **Anyone who has gone to the beach knows the sand travels back on clothing, in cars, and into homes and laundry rooms. The study ignores take-home asbestos exposures on people, homes, cars, and pets.**

**For over ten years the USEPA, Illinois EPA, and Illinois Attorney General's office has allowed unfiltered, asbestos polluted waste water to discharge from a Johns-Manville Superfund site pipe and release trillions of asbestos fibers into Lake Michigan during permitted discharges into Lake Michigan, where it washes up on Illinois beaches. They have also allowed the Johns Manville lagoons to flood the adjacent State Dedicated Nature Preserve with its contaminated asbestos-laden water, pollute the Nature Preserve, and discharge into the Dead River, which empties into Lake Michigan. In addition, this massive release of microscopic asbestos fibers has contaminated the lake-bottom sediments.**

**Over the years, these sediments have been dredged up by the Army Corps of Engineers with Illinois EPA, IDR, and USEPA approval and dumped on the shoreline of Illinois Beach State Park. ComEd/Midwest Generation also dredge lake sediments immediately adjacent to the microscopic asbestos discharge. These dredged sediments have been dumped at Illinois Beach State Park, further contaminating the beaches with asbestos fibers and pieces. The asbestos fibers travel south in the lake currents at least as far as Chicago, washing up on the beaches including Chicago's famous Oak Street Beach.**

**What are state and federal agencies covering-up?**

- **Johns-Manville generated the asbestos debris and invisible asbestos fibers; the IEPA and USEPA, along with the Illinois Attorney General's office, allowed them to discharge it into Lake Michigan.**
- **The USEPA and IEPA allowed ComEd/Midwest Generation and the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the asbestos-contaminated sediments and dump it on the Illinois Beach State Park shoreline, requiring the Park to be closed periodically for asbestos clean-up since 1998. Both the north and south ends of the park are presently closed due to asbestos contamination.**
- **The Illinois Department of Public Health reviewed and approved faulty data and irresponsibly allowed the beaches to reopen in 1998. The ATSDR/CDC reviewed the IDPH data in 2000 and without checking the data, erroneously rubber-stamped the data as protective of public health. The CDC review has now been challenged by health and safety asbestos expert Jeffery Camplin and is under review by the administrator and the Inspector General of ATSDR/CDC.**

- The University of Illinois at Chicago performed further flawed testing in 2004-2005 in an attempt to validate previous rigged findings that the beaches were safe. Although the UIC study found elevated levels on and off-shore of the Park, their interim draft report erroneously concluded there was no asbestos health risk to the public, miraculously without even taking any air samples! Presently, it is still a draft due to the bad data that does not support the draft's conclusions.
- Now IDNR along with the USEPA, IDPH, and the Centers for Disease Control are apparently committing scientific fraud by conducting "rigged" activity-based asbestos air sampling during activities and conditions designed to minimize asbestos fibers in the air. Today, IDNR's consultant PSI is conducting air sample testing in an apparent attempt to cover-up the skewed UIC 2005 draft report.
- It is a cool spring day today; it does not simulate the hot, dry conditions on the beach in July and August. This skewed air-sampling attempt has been designed in secret with the willful exclusion of the public even when written requests to be involved were made by health and safety asbestos expert Jeffery Camplin and the Dunesland Society. The state and ATSDR/CDC had insisted that the public be excluded from input on the design of the present testing protocols. It is apparent that because the state officials have been involved in dumping the polluted sediments on the Illinois shoreline, or have facilitated the dumping, they have willfully excluded independent, scientific input. Such input would cause them to use more stringent and proper air testing in order to achieve the best science in determining the extent of asbestos fiber contamination to which the public is being unwittingly exposed. It is clear that since they dumped it, they do not want the public to become aware of the extent of the contamination; therefore, they rig the tests. Willfully dumping asbestos-contaminated material and not properly disposing of it is a criminal violation.

This testing is being performed to cover-up federal and state agencies' bungling of asbestos-contamination in a public area for over ten years at the expense of the health and safety of the public. It is time that the beaches are closed and unwitting exposures cease for park workers and the public. There is no safe level of asbestos exposure in public areas known to be chronically contaminated with visible and microscopic asbestos.

Lake County, Illinois now has a mesothelioma rate over seven times the expected average. We have become aware of non-occupational mesothelioma victims in their late 30's and early 40's in Lake County. Their only common thread seems to be visiting Illinois beaches.

The public officials are more interested in rigging sampling and testing protocols to cover-up their apparent misconduct in willfully dumping contaminated sediments than in trying to protect the health and safety of the families who visit Illinois beaches from Illinois Beach State Park to Chicago, including Chicago's famous Oak Street Beach.

For further background information on the Illinois shoreline and asbestos, go to [www.asbestosbeach.com](http://www.asbestosbeach.com). ###