

Senate Subcommittee of Toxic Substances and Chemical Wastes

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Resident of the Love Canal Area

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My name is Grace McCoulf. I am a housewife and mother of two small children. I live in the Love Canal. The Love Canal is a Chemical Dumpsite used by at least one major chemical company to dispose of hundreds of hazardous wastes over a period of 30 years.

Hundreds of problems have occurred over recent months all resulting from the Love Canal. The families affected have mental, physical and psychological problems directly stemming from the hazardous dumpsite. The Love Canal tragedy has occurred and because it occurred many eyes across the country have been opened. The Love Canal has served as an education for other areas thought to be similar in make up. The Love Canal is fortunate enough to have a fine team of residents who have educated themselves and are able to travel to other areas to lecture on the problems of such sites. With an educated population pushing the politicians and bringing to light all potential problems related to hazardous dumping, the politicians can help with new and more effective laws - - - laws which will be and must be enforced to their fullest!! With such powerful laws, the chemical industry must find alternate legal ways to dispose of wastes. Laws are great but laws are useless unless they are enforced and when enforced, they must bring the offenders to their knees and making sure any offender is liable for all problems caused.

Because of all that has happened, it has come time for the Federal Government to perform its primary function - - to serve the interest of the people. Its time to show the entire United States population that there is a budget other than the Foreign Aid Budget. The American people see only the billions shipped out to strangers and never see the aid given to the needy citizens who are the ones paying the taxes - - the same taxes going overseas. Who needs it more?

We, the people have been very patient in our efforts to obtain the basic human rights. After all, we consist soley of innocent third party victims. We did nothing wrong. We are the victims but in reality, we are treated like the wrong doers! Can you tell us why?

People around the nation as well as groups in the State of New York realize this is critical to our country's future. Some of these organizations who support the permanent relocation of residents affected by the Love Canal and the clean up of our environment are: Operation Clean, United Auto Workers Union, Sierra Club, A F L - C I O, Niagara-Orleans Council of Churches, Bloody Run Association, West Valley Nuclear Association, Buffalo Workers Union, Small Business Assoc., Goodyear Local 277, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Local 593, Union Carbide Local 8-250, Mission Peace for The Children, and in whole, the National Council of Churches. In addition, the national coverage of our plight has reached out from the Phil Donahue Show and A B C Close Up, "The Killing Ground". The national response to our plight is remarkable. The people are more concerned than the Federal Government.

We are the victims, and we want only what is right. The way the problem is being handled by the State and by the courts, we must sit and rot in this deteriorating environment. We are left with the responsibility of deciding to have another child here and worrying about weighing the odds of conceiving a child with a birth defect. Why should we be trapped into such a corner. New York State is telling us to practice birth control. We must watch our families deteriorate and our health suffer. Our children are sick, our homes are valueless and we have boarded up homes for neighbors. The entire meaning of family has been corroded. We are now at our limit. We can wait no longer. While the industries and local governments who created this problem stall and point their finger at the next guy, the victims suffer. While our state and Federal Governments drag their feet and do nothing.

we, the victims are left to die. Well, we are through waiting. We are through being insulted with the States ideas of help and with the states idea of remedy. Their remedy is actually taking two steps backwards. The guilty parties are dragging us down. Our lives are ruined. Well, it's our turn to drag down a few guilty parties.

We have mentioned our supporters earlier. I don't believe I have to count the total number of votes they represent. The National Council of Churches alone represents millions of votes and believe me, they are our best supporters. We have grown from a tattered neighborhood group to a real national power, but that is just a grain of sand on a beach. We will get what should have been ours from the start-- safe and healthy homes to raise our families without fear of the unknown. We are determined to overcome the obstacles. There is more money spent on trivias with us here than there would be to buy our homes and get us out. Remove the people, then decide what you will do with the area. We the people of the Love Canal are worried, sick and very disappointed with our government who is supposed to be there working for the people and not against us. We want our children and grandchildren to have a future worth living for.