

A Bi-Partisan Bill For Consideration 2025

S.F. No. 1979 H.F.1457

A bill for an act relating to education; prohibiting construction of schools on land that is located within one quarter mile a dump site or closed landfill. Amending Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 123B.51

Our elected Government Officials have a sworn duty is to protect the health safety and welfare of the public.

Please pass this BI Partisan bill that provides

1 Preventing children's exposure to carcinogenic environments whenever possible.

2 Raising parents' awareness of the hidden danger once it's determined that a human risk exists.

3 Opportunity for early detection that comes with the knowledge of ones surroundings.

Children's bodies are more sensitive than adults.

Children are less able to handle toxic chemical exposures. Children breathe more air and eat more per pound than adults.

What exercising precaution in the siting of schools will prevent:

Exercising precaution in the siting of educational facilities will prevent injuries and illnesses among children and employees, future financial losses in terms of decreased student IQ's, increases in, and increased potential for lawsuits costing facilities much needed education dollars.

There is no Government Agency that will accept liability for siting a school near a toxic site.

Review of school insurance policy excludes coverage from pollution.

Local City regulations prohibit toxic landfills from being permitted next to a school, now it's time to pass State legislation preventing schools from being built next to toxic dump sites!

Preventing schools from being built within 1/4 mile of dump site or former landfills will prevent sewer ,water ,electric cables, and other utilities from being run threw contaminated soils.

This limits the toxic plume from traveling.
Contaminating precious water supplies .

Passage of this bill will not require a fiscal note nor an environmental study if a school is not built within the 1/4 mile perimeter.

I have not found any legislation prohibiting schools sited on or near dump site.

It's a parents right to know :
The State of Minnesota is looking out for the children, and school staff long term health.

Passage of this bill does not require a Phase 1 or Phase 2 study of a brownfield within these boundaries by the MPCA .

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Fourteen years ago I got involved to oppose siting an elementary school on a

Minnesota Superfund listed site.

As a former city planning commissioner and city councilman one thing became clear. It only takes three votes to permit a school on a toxic dump site over the objections of the majority of voices speaking against the school boards wishes.

I am using an Elementary School as an example how government agencies involved in the permitting process each approved the permitting process to move forward. I have publicly spoken to the City Council, Local School Board,

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Department of Health. Department of Education, Attorney Generals Office, Department of Labor and Industry and the Rice Creek Watershed District .

Each of these entities acted as silos reviewing a little piece of the puzzle in their wheelhouse giving approval without a complete overall picture.

They relied on a Local School District who hired an Environmental Consultant whose web site stated { we are often hired for the most **High Risk** properties. When necessary ,can obtain the appropriate assurance letters from the state. }

Dear Minnesota State Legislators

Integrated Resource
Management, Inc.

February 27 2025

I am the Chief Environmental Investigator for Integrated Resource Management, Inc. working with Erin Brockovich.

Erin and I strongly support your legislation Senate file 1979 House File 1497 prohibiting construction of schools within 1/4 mile or 1,320 feet of a Brownfield (Reclaimed Pollution Site). This legislation is critical in preventing school districts in Minnesota from building schools on land devalued by contamination that took place decades ago.

PITS People Investigating Toxic Sites compiled a list of schools built on or nears toxic dump sites. The State of California has the highest number of schools listed followed by the State of Minnesota . The majority of which are located in the Rice Creek Watershed District.

In 2011 Wildwood Elementary School was permitted and built on or near a mixed municipal dump area. It was allowed to surcharge the Mixed Municipal Dump Area and run sewer and water lines next to contaminated soils in violation of Minnesota Plumbing Code rules

Part 4715.1710, subpart 3. In 2013 the MPCA listed Lost Lake as impaired for high mercury levels in fish. Lost lake is down gradient from Wildwood Elementary School and overflows into White Bear Lake. Suspect source of contamination of Lost Lake.

Recently the City of Grant issued a Conditional Use permit to a private LLC Limited Liability Corporation on that same public school property being leased for \$ 1.00 per year. It requires that 50,000 cubic yards be removed from under the foot print of the building located on top of the mixed municipal dump area to support the structure, leaving the rest of the toxic materials on site, requiring sewer and waterlines to be run through or near contaminated soils providing a pathway for toxins to travel to public bodies of water.

While remedial efforts may have been undertaken years prior, there is considerable evidence that harmful conditions can continue to exist. Why risk the health of children (and staff) by exposing them to potential contact with harmful pollution in the classroom and on the playground? Surely, more suitable land can be found for school sites!

Our combined experience working in all fifty states and Canada has taught us that your proposed legislation is reasonable criteria for restricting the building of schools on sites where children and teachers could be subjected to sustained exposure over a considerable period of time; the latent harmful effects of which may not be revealed for years beyond their exposure. We are astounded that anyone would oppose such legislation!

Too often, as regulatory agencies re-evaluate whether remedial actions that were completed years ago were sufficiently protective of human health and the environment; an all too frequent finding is to the contrary.

In many situations it is likely that these sites will be reopened and polluters will be forced to take additional remedial action to address vapor intrusion and other issues. Literally hundreds of "Closed," "No Further Action" sites have been reopened!!!
Why chance it?

Erin and I would love to come work this bill... it has always been our policy to prevent exposure to cancerous environments whenever possible. The best cure for cancer is prevention, awareness, and early detection. Your Bill addresses all three. We would be happy to talk to you about this and testify at your hearing , our contact information is below.

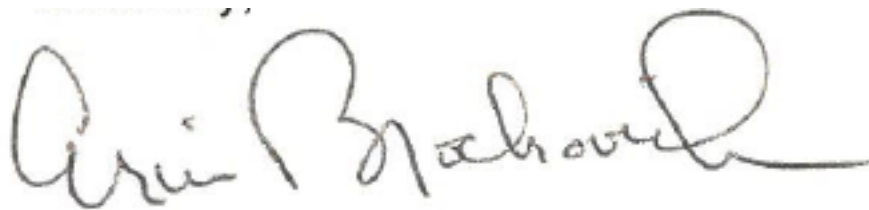
Sincerely,

Robert Bowcock
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Erin Brockovich Consumer Advocate



Washington County water plume could be Superfund site, again

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story incorrectly described the location.

An area that includes parts of Afton, Lakeland and Lakeland Shores should be put on the state's list of Superfund sites for the second time, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

The agency on Wednesday proposed adding the site and eight others to the list.

Water in that area of Washington County is contaminated with traces of volatile organic compounds, which can include chemical degreasing agents.

Until recently the problem was largely considered solved. After the chemicals were discovered in the 1980s, local wells were sealed and a new water system was set up. The area was taken off the state's list of Superfund sites in 2000.

But the state Department of Health changed the guidelines. The department slashed the allowable level of the chemicals to 0.4 parts per billion, less than one-tenth the previous allowable level. Under the new guidelines, several residential wells in the area now have water that is considered polluted.

The agency is proposing to re-list the area as a Superfund site to make funding available to address the newly defined problem.

The other sites proposed for the list are in or near Minneapolis, Willmar, Virginia, Ely, Rochester, Dundas, Bemidji and Isle.

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