

December 13, 2020

Here's what's happening.

Here's what you can do!

Dear Friends,

We appreciate the commitment that you have shown in helping to restrict the toxic chemicals and smells that are being emitted from the oil storage tanks in South Portland.

Earlier this year, the state legislature passed LD1915, directing the Department of Environmental Protection to study how best to measure and control emissions from all aboveground petroleum storage tanks in Maine. That report will be submitted to the legislature in the beginning of January. The city's Clean Air Advisory Committee will review the DEP report and tell the city council whether they agree or not with the DEP recommendations. Then, the hard work begins - to make sure the study results in a state law that will provide the protections we need. Technology exists to effectively measure and control up to 95 percent of emissions. What is needed is the will to require its use by the oil industry, while providing the public with the transparency and accountability we deserve. How Maine responds to this problem of pollution could be precedent setting. But it's a heavy lift, with the people of Maine standing up to the oil companies that have a lot of resources at their disposal. **With your help we can do it.**

How can you help?

The next few months will be critical as we lobby for the state legislation to require and enforce the most robust possible monitoring and control of emissions, as well as stricter emission standards for South Portland and Maine as a whole. Once the recommendations of the DEP are made available, we need to be ready to jump into action. The Environment & Natural Resources Committee will be reviewing the DEP report and writing a bill to determine how the tanks are monitored and how their emissions are controlled.

Here's how you can help in that process:

- Write to legislators
- Submit written testimony to the ENR committee or speak at hearings.
- Write letters to the editor, now and as the process unfolds. See info below. (The great thing is that written comments can be used for *multiple purposes*.)

Get Ready

Once we have the DEP report, we will send you suggested talking points you might want to address in regards to the DEP recommendations. Please start formulating your thoughts, so we

all can be ready when the legislative process begins. It is very persuasive if you write about how the emissions from the tanks have personally affected your life.

Here are some things to consider:

- * How have the tank fumes affected the quality of life where you live?
- * Do you experience any health issues or symptoms you associate with air quality?
- * Are you concerned about children in daycare or school near the tanks?
- * Do you worry about the long-term effects on your health and your family's?
- * If you are a health professional, what are your concerns about the impact of the emissions?
- * If you are pregnant, elderly or have other health concerns, do you worry the emissions might increase your health risks?
- * Are you concerned about how air pollution is linked to greater vulnerability to COVID-19?
- * Are you concerned about the social justice issues of a community being exposed to significant amounts of toxic emissions?

If you would like help putting your thoughts in writing, let us know by writing to us at protectsouthportland@gmail.com. We will be conducting more outreach on the bill in the new year. If you are at all interested in being involved, [please fill out this form](#).

Writing a letter to the editor

1.) Sentry

Email the Editor

Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must include writer's name, full address, and phone number. The deadline is Monday at noon.

2.) Forecaster

Email the Editor

Letters should be no longer than 300 words and must include writer's name, full address, and daytime and evening phone numbers. The deadline is noon Monday.

3.) Portland Press Herald

Email the Editor

Or send mail to Editor, Portland Press Herald, P. O. Box 1460, Portland, Me 04104-5009.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words and include the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number.

Hoping you are staying safe and well during these challenging times!