



Upholding our human right to live in a
healthy environment

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**STATEMENT OF MICHELE ROBERTS
TO THE
US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD, DIOXIN REVIEW PANEL
PUBLIC MEETING**

**WASHINGTON, DC
JULY 13, 2010**

Hello, my name is Michele Roberts and I am the Campaign and Policy Coordinator for Advocates for Environmental Human Rights. Advocates for Environmental Human Rights is a human rights law firm dedicated to upholding the human right to a healthy environment. Thank you for convening this meeting. I would like to begin by stressing the importance of finalizing the Dioxin Reassessment process today.

Health disparities in fence-line communities such as the historical African- American community of Mossville, Louisiana, show why we need the Dioxin Reassessment finalized today. The Mossville community is surrounded by 14 toxic industrial facilities, 7 of those facilities report dioxin releases to the Toxic Release Inventory ("TRI").

A few years prior to companies being mandated to report to TRI there were private and federal government investigations of dioxin exposure in Mossville residents. Because the state of Louisiana State Health and Hospital refused to investigate, Mossville Environmental Action Now on behalf of the Mossville residents petitioned the EPA to undertake a dioxin exposure assessment. EPA enlisted the Agency for Toxic Substance Disease Registry ("ATSDR") to undertake this in 1998.

From the ASTDR investigation we know 3 things:

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1. The dioxin level in the blood of tested Mossville residents is 3xs higher than the national average as determined by not one but two, test by ATSDR in Mossville;
2. The composition of the dioxin compounds found in Mossville, are unique and different from the US population; and
3. Dioxins are not only in our blood but in attic dust, yard crops and fish from local waters surrounding Mossville.

Both ATSDR and EPA have resisted assessing whether the dioxins that the Mossville residents have been exposed to are associated with the dioxins from the local industrial facilities as shown on the CNN, "Toxic America" report on June 2, 2010. Mossville Environment Action Now, the Subra Company and Advocates for Environmental Human Rights collected the data in a report, *Industrial Sources of Dioxin Poisoning in Mossville, Louisiana: A Report Based on the Government's Own Data*, that shows 7 of the industrial facilities that surround the Mossville community have the unique dioxin compounds that have been found in their blood and environment.

We want a dioxin reassessment that requires all environmental permitting and monitoring that ensure that any dioxin emissions does not increase the risk of adverse health on the surrounding community. We also want a dioxin reassessment that respects our human rights by applying the precautionary principle instead of the risk assessment model, which is a poor tool for preventing environmental and health threats.

Thank you.