



For Immediate Release
April 2, 2015

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Statement of Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Regarding Solvay Company's PFNA Advertising Campaign
Company's public relations efforts appear insincere

Gloucester County, NJ – Today, April 2, Solvay Specialty Polymers of West Deptford, Gloucester County, New Jersey placed a full page advertisement in the South Jersey Times regarding contamination of the region by Perfluorononanoate (“PFNA”) also known as C9 (see link: <http://bit.ly/1MHaFdQ>)

Solvay is paying for a full page ad in the community where the chemical they used for decades, PFNA, has polluted drinking water in an attempt to position itself as blameless. But the thousands of people in the south Jersey region who have had to drink this contaminated water for years without knowing it are not likely to be easily persuaded that Solvay has taken “additional steps” or that they deserve credit for the limited actions they have taken. And certainly the story is not over nor is the sampling that Solvay has had to do sufficient or conclusive. The extent of the pollution is not known and the exposure of people and the environment to PFNA released by Solvay won't be addressed until a safe drinking water standard is adopted by New Jersey, requiring it be removed from drinking water sources. The PFNA problem is still very much alive.

Solvay says their “work” has been voluntary and “in response to public concerns” but in fact they were delivered an Intent of Notice to Sue by the Borough of Paulsboro before they did anything at all and they were required to take steps to address the release of PNFA into the water, soil, and air under NJDEP's pollution clean-up program, which is based on federal law. Solvay is already required by NJDEP to clean up other long-standing toxic pollution problems at their facility

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and when PFNA was discovered in the local groundwater, NJDEP required them to investigate the PFNA and other perfluorinated compound pollution problems in the region around their plant in West Deptford. This is because PFNA has been used at the Solvay facility (owned by other companies in the past) in its plastics manufacturing since at least the mid-1980's in an exclusive patented process that released huge quantities of PFNA into the environment over the years. (For background see: <http://bit.ly/1IVOV8m> and <http://bit.ly/1P3rkae>).

Recent sampling of water found PFNA contamination in no less than 5 municipal wells in the Solvay area and in many private wells in the surrounding neighborhoods, causing the shutdown of many municipal wells at great expense and tremendous worry to the public and requiring the installation of home well water treatment systems by NJDEP so that people wouldn't have to keep drinking the polluted water. And more investigations are underway to identify how far it has gone; sampling has shown PFNA in public water wells as far as 16 miles away and in the Delaware River – even fish in the Delaware River downstream of Solvay were found to contain PFNA in their flesh.

As far as Solvay's so-called "extensive" actions, DRN engaged a technical expert to review the details of the work plan that Solvay proposed to NJDEP in 2013 and we found it didn't go nearly far enough to get to the bottom of the PFNA pollution problem. NJDEP considers the investigation to be ongoing and in need of much more work. Solvay hasn't even completed everything they are supposed to do and no conclusions can yet be drawn about the limits of PFNA contamination. Their "major findings" in their ad try to explain away the contamination that has been found and reads more like a whitewash than an "update".

In the advertisement, Solvay still denies responsibility for the release of PFNA to the environment and won't even admit that there are public health risks, despite extensive scientific evidence to the contrary. Science and facts recorded by government agencies (and even documents filed with EPA by Solvay themselves) directly contradict their denial of the truth—that tons of toxic PFNA was released into the air and water in this region from Solvay's plastics manufacturing facility for decades. Until Solvay accepts responsibility for what they have done and cleans up all the pollution they have caused, it is not likely that newspaper ads will gain them any favor with those who have been subjected to the results of their actions.

In the advertisement, Solvay is still trying to make it sound as if PFNA is not a danger by minimizing its toxicity (“one drop in the volume of water needed to fill 400 Olympic-sized swimming pools”). Scientific and health reports have revealed that PFNA is highly toxic and has health effects at very low doses; it is persistent in the environment, doesn’t break down biologically, and builds up in human blood. It simply doesn’t belong in our drinking water, soil, sediments, or air, or in fish or, most obviously, people.

The timing is suspect since the Drinking Water Quality Institute is scheduled to meet April 8 and may announce a recommended maximum contaminant level for PFNA to NJDEP for public rulemaking. Once adopted, all water suppliers would be required to treat their water to meet the new safe drinking water standard set by the state. Much unwanted attention on the culprit responsible for this toxic contamination is likely. An ad campaign at this moment looks more like a Public Relations move than a sincere “update” to their “neighbors” (“An Update and Thank You for Solvay’s Neighbors”).

For more information, complete files showing NJDEP sampling results for PFNA, PFOA, and other perfluorinated compounds and more go to: <http://bit.ly/1IVSone>.

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