

Lafarge's Lordstown Demolition Landfill May Shut Down Soon

On-going Compliance and Toxic Gas Problems Push Closure Decision as Competitor asks Ohio EPA for Massive Tonnage Increase

CLEVELAND, OHIO, USA, July 18, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lafarge's demolition and construction waste (C&D) landfill in Lordstown, Ohio may be closing years early due to on-going compliance problems, toxic gas issues and long term mismanagement. Lafarge, now known as LafargeHolcim, is one of the world's largest cement producers.

The 130 acre Lordstown Landfill began operations in 2004 and created several complicated environmental issues. During the preparatory excavation,

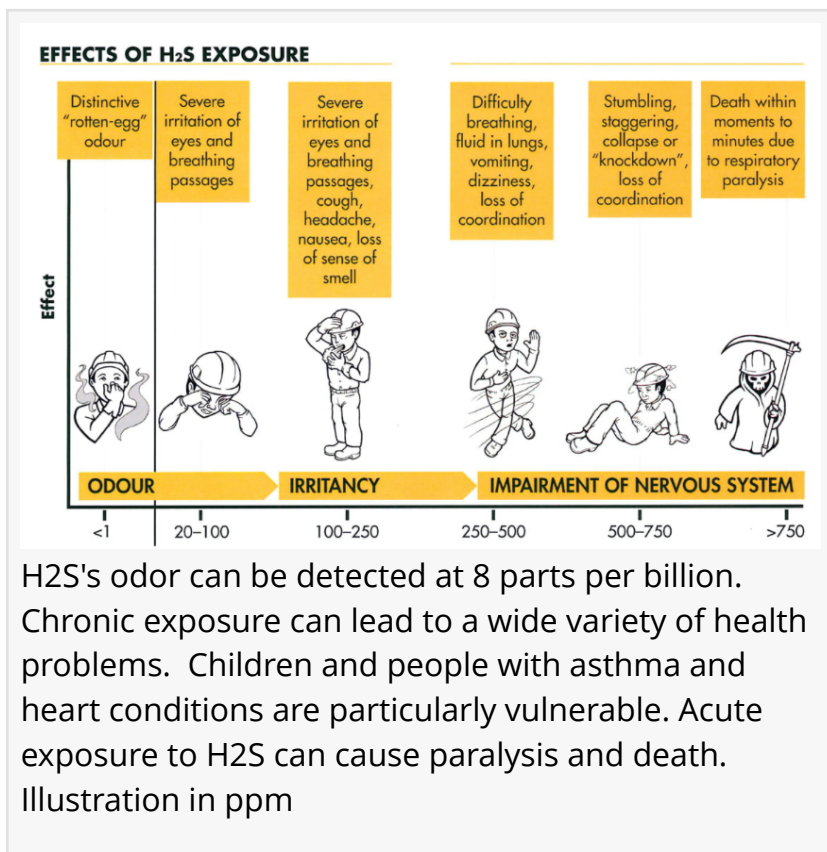
[Lafarge deeply over-excavated the initial waste cells.](#) The excavation exposed multiple groundwater tables which poured 30 million gallons a year into the waste from the base and sides of the landfill. Lafarge management never reported the perpetual problem.

“

If they have too many problems with 4500 tons...what do you think is going to happen here with 12,000 tons? ...The C&D is out of control”

Lori Poignon, Resident living near the Sunny Farms Landfill

During an Ohio EPA inspection in 2015, Lafarge was caught pumping 100,000 gallons a day of water from under the landfill into a pond. The ammonia-contaminated water discharged into a tributary of Duck Creek. This, in part, led to a consent order in 2016 which included 31 orders and a \$2.8 million dollar fine which was reduced over 90% to \$270,000. Unfortunately, the groundwater intrusion is irrevocable and can only be controlled by an intercepting pump system which must be operated indefinitely.



H₂S's odor can be detected at 8 parts per billion. Chronic exposure can lead to a wide variety of health problems. Children and people with asthma and heart conditions are particularly vulnerable. Acute exposure to H₂S can cause paralysis and death.

95% of the C&D waste which Lafarge receives originates from outside Ohio and is railed in by CSX via New York. C&D (which 90% is demolition) usually includes asbestos insulation, lead from paint and plumbing fixtures, arsenic from treated lumber, formaldehyde in household paneling, mercury in switches and thermostats and mold from drywall. 95% of the demolished buildings pre-date the EPA by half a century.

Also, there are very few regulations which require obsolescent structures to be cleaned out before demolition — so paints, chemicals, waste oils, pesticides, electronics, solvents and lab wastes from debilitated garages, barns, factories, medical facilities and homes are included. Moreover, [garbage and other more expensive wastes can be mixed](#) into the outbound material.

Consequently, C&D creates a wide range of poisonous gases as it decomposes in a landfill. A partial list of toxic gases includes hydrogen sulfide, carbon disulfide, carbonyl sulfide, n-propyl mercaptan, thiophene and diethyl sulfide. Several of these gases smell like rotten eggs and several can enter your body through the skin. The putrid smell led to hundreds of odor and illness complaints by Lafarge's neighbors through the past 17 years.

More details on the nature of Lordstown's toxic gas emerged in 2019 after dozens of shallow landfill samples were analyzed by an independent laboratory. While hydrogen sulfide's (H₂S) rotten-egg odor can be detected by most people at 10 parts per billion (ppb), Lordstown's in-situ hydrogen sulfide gas concentrations reach a staggering 39,000,000 ppb with carbon disulfide at 90,000 ppb.

For reference, a recent Supreme Court decision in England on a case, filed by a citizen for her dying child born with lung disease, set a limit for the perpetrating C&D landfill at one (1) ppb of H₂S.

For 15 years Lafarge downplayed the odor issue and never installed a toxic gas control or safety system. [The Ohio EPA demanded one through a second consent order in October 2019.](#)

Symptoms upon SO₂-Exposure

The diagram illustrates the human respiratory system with labels for various symptoms. On the left, under a red-bordered box labeled 'Acute toxicity', are 'Irritation of respiratory tract' and 'Decreased ciliar activity'. On the right, under a blue-bordered box labeled 'Chronic toxicity', are 'Bronchitis', 'Asthma', 'Emphysema', 'Oedema', and 'Cancer'. A bracket on the far right groups these chronic symptoms under the label 'Increased respiratory resistance'. A small circular inset at the bottom right shows a red crab-like insect.

Ohio EPA allows landfills to burn H₂S and produce SO₂ gas but will not restrict huge waste volumes that cause the problem. SO₂ causes headaches, nausea, tremors, convulsions and is especially hurtful to children. Sunny Farms is now one of Ohio's largest air polluters.

Lafarge installed a low-budget gas-control system in 2020; it completely failed to stop both the gas emissions and complaints. Components of the system were destroyed by sulfuric acid created by landfill moisture reacting with the hyper-concentrated hydrogen sulfide. Massive leaks in the system exposed workers to the toxic gases; multiple people were sickened and an employee was hospitalized.

Lordstown has violated the Ohio EPA 2016 consent order's 20 ppb level for off-site H₂S more than 1,000 times and nearly 100 times in the first months of 2022.

On May 10, 2022, the Ohio EPA authorized Lafarge to install a rented landfill gas burner, without an air permit, to further study the landfill's gaseous toxins. It will produce SO₂, a priority pollutant, which causes its own health problems.

Lafarge is currently operating without a license. The Trumbull County Health Department tabled the license decision in December 2021. License application documents indicate Lordstown has approximately eight years of remaining airspace and only few waste cells left for construction.

Personnel indicate the overwhelming environmental management problems may force Lafarge to close the site. Upon closure, numerous long-term controls must be implemented per EPA regulations and consent orders. Lafarge must seal and maintain the landfill's leaking clay cap, control the stormwater, pump and monitor the groundwater, control the toxic gas, monitor the surrounding air quality and maintain millions of dollars for post-closure funding for a minimum 25 years.

A 34-page verified complaint regarding Lordstown's leaking clay cap was submitted to the Ohio EPA in July 2022. A verified complaint filed in June 2021 led to 14 different land and water violations in October 2021.

Sunny Farms Landfill, located near Fostoria in western Ohio, is a competitor of Lafarge's landfill.



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

January 24, 2022

TRANSMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Ms. Gina Turney
Lordstown Construction Recovery
6205 Newton Falls Bailey Road SW
Warren, Ohio 44481

**Re: Lordstown Construction Recovery
Notice of Violation (NOV)
NOV
Construction & Demolition Debris
Trumbull County
CDDL018743**

Subject: Notice of Violation

Dear Ms. Turney:

I am writing to you regarding my review of the hydrogen sulfide data collected by the stationary Jerome J605 Hydrogen Sulfide Analyzer for the time period between December 4, 2021, and January 3, 2022. The goal of my review was to determine compliance with Ohio's laws as found in Chapter 3714 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and Chapter 3745-400 of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC).

Findings

Ohio EPA identified the following violation of Ohio's environmental laws. In order to resolve the violation at your facility, we recommend promptly addressing the violation:

1. **ORC Chapter: 3714**
OAC Rule 3745-400-11(B)(16): *"The owner or operator shall not cause or allow operations to create a nuisance or health hazard from noise, dust, odors, and the attraction and/or breeding of birds, insects, rodents, and other vectors."*

(a) **Odor Complaints:**

Lafarge's Lordstown Landfill has violated the Ohio EPA's hydrogen sulfide limit more than 1,000 times and nearly 100 times in the first months of 2022. In May, Ohio EPA authorized Lafarge to burn Lordstown's H₂S without an air permit but no waste volume restrictions.

Sunny Farms also rails 97% of its waste from the East Coast through CSX. Sunny Farms also has a long history of choking its neighbors with H₂S and now emits approximately 3,000 tons a year of sulfur dioxide from burning landfill gas.

In apparent anticipation of Lordstown's early closure, Sunny Farms has asked the Ohio EPA to increase their waste allowance by 4,500 tons per day — which equates closely to Lordstown's average daily waste receipts. Ohio EPA's approval would increase Sunny Farms' intake to 12,000 tons a day making it one of the largest landfills in the multi-state area. The volume is equivalent to 1,000 curbside garbage trucks every day. Sunny Farms is also asking to operate 24 hours/day.

Upon learning of the massive out-of-state waste increase request, Lori Poignon, one leader of a large group opposing the Sunny Farms Landfill stated "If they have too many problems with 4500 tons...what do you think is going to happen here with 12,000 tons? ...The C&D is out of control"

Based on the habitually poor performance of LafargeHolcim's management team, closing the Lordstown Landfill may be in everyone's best interest — except, of course — for those living near Fostoria, Ohio.

Markus Aurelius

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