

BACKGROUND

Responding to growing public concern over air toxics pollution in numerous Portland neighborhoods, in March 2016 NECN endorsed a letter requesting action from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Health Authority, and Multnomah County Health Department. We demanded accurate and comprehensive data, identification of unnamed hotspots, and continuous public information and engagement.

The catalyst for this originated from this [Portland Mercury](#) story, which sparked the DEQ to reveal data indicating a monthly average of **49 times** the state air-safety benchmark level for cadmium, and **159 times** DEQ's air-safety goal for the carcinogen arsenic within the Portland area.

This eventually led to the companies responsible being held to account, new regulations being formed and enforced by the DEQ, and wide-reaching state legislation to address air toxics and pollution passed under the banner of [Cleaner Air Oregon](#). While most involved consider this a victory, it shed light on the larger problem of a lack of regulation across the state, and the continued presence of pollution in our air and water.

A SUMMARY OF TIMELINE OF AIR TOXICS RELATED EVENTS

2003

DEQ monitored air quality near Jefferson High School

2005-2006

- DEQ measures air toxics concentration in Portland; Set Air toxics "benchmarks" creating guidelines for 52 pollutants.
- Finds levels of pollutants in Portland to be above benchmarks.

2007

Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) moves to set limits on how much pollution art glass manufacturers can emit; glass industry is exempt from pollution controls

2009-2011

- Portland Air Toxics Solution Project takes place - focus on reduction strategies and computer modeling to predict air pollution concentrations
- Harriet Tubman School is monitored - Cadmium was found to be above benchmark levels

2013

- DEQ finds there are likely "multiple" cadmium sources
- Partnership with the US Forest Service begins to conduct moss study

2015

- Moss study cadmium data received by DEQ in May
- Glass facilities listed as potential sources of metal emissions by DEQ in June
- DEQ places air monitor in Southeast site near Bullseye Glass manufacturer to capture 24-hour air samples throughout month of October

January/February 2016

- DEQ completes analysis of air monitoring data showing elevated levels of cadmium and arsenic -the Portland Mercury breaks the story
- Legislature reserves \$2.5 million for air monitoring

March 2016

- DEQ begins investigations of other art glass making facilities
- Agencies begin Investigation of air and soil with high levels of arsenic [FAQ](#)
- DEQ asks two glass factories to sign agreement to limit heavy metal use
- Temporary rules are released by DEQ to prohibit chromium VI, cadmium, and arsenic at glass facilities until emission control devices are installed; prohibits chromium III until maximum usage rate is created
- Air quality monitoring project begins around [Precision Castparts](#) (due to elevated levels of metals identified near the facility in previous studies)
- Uroboros signs agreement with DEQ to limit heavy metals

April 2016

- [Over 1 Billion Dollar lawsuit](#) filed for SE residents living around Bullseye Glass
- Governor Brown unveils "Cleaner Air Oregon" calling for "health based standards"
- EPA says that art glass manufacturers fall under federal regulation created in 2007: "[National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants](#)"
- DEQ passes temporary rules for glass manufacturers
- Hexavalent Chromium is found above benchmark levels in SE Portland
- City, County, and Portland State University launch air toxic pollution study
- Poisonous gas is found on Hayden Island - American Petroleum is suspected
- DEQ releases list of 300+ businesses with permits to emit heavy metals - will prioritize inspections

May 2016

- Spike in lead is found near Bullseye Glass. Governor Brown issues cease and desist order.

June 2016

- Bullseye signs "Mutual Agreement and Final Order" two days before Cease and Desist expires

September 2016

- Uroboros Art Glass announces that it is closing