

years negotiating a consent decree" if a later report will add further requirements. "That sends a negative message to industry and the community that you can meet the requirements and still not be able to do the cleanup," she says.

The source calls the delay "really unacceptable," saying that "most people living in the community are expecting a cleanup. We've been here for nine years and it's time to do the work." The source adds that the delay is expensive for the task force, costing the companies between \$40,000 and \$50,000 each day. "We can't afford to sit here and bleed," she says.

A community activist is not concerned about the potential cost to the task force, saying "if they hemorrhage, too bad." This source adds that "Our community has suffered much more than their company has suffered," and charges that there have been cases of childhood leukemia in the community due to the

pollution at the site. The PRPs "saved millions of dollars by dumping stuff in our neighborhood," according to the source. She acknowledges that the PRPs were conforming to applicable laws when they sent materials to the site for reprocessing, but contends that "it was wrong."

The community source also charges that the PRPs are "hiding behind a consent decree that was a lousy consent decree to begin with." The source contends, for example, that there is mercury contamination on site and that the PRPs knew about it when negotiating the consent decree, but are not taking remedial action to address it. This source says the concerns the PRPs have with the final SRO report are the same as the ones raised when the draft was released, adding "let's get on with it." She adds that "everybody's just kind of waiting to see, trying to figure out whose court the ball is in" before proceeding.

CITIZENS CLAIM JOB CONCERNS KEEP TWO SITES FROM SUPERFUND LISTING

Residents near contaminated federal sites in Kentucky and Ohio are raising fears that economic pressure to maintain the jobs associated with the currently-open facilities is stalling efforts to get the sites listed on the Superfund national priorities list (NPL). But sources with one of the facilities say the cleanup is separate from plant operations.

The sites—gaseous diffusion plants—both scored over the minimum cutoff point for NPL listing over a year ago, but have yet to be listed. The sites are located outside Paducah, KY, and Portsmouth, OH. The Paducah site received a hazard ranking score of 56.9 and the Portsmouth site scored 54.6. A 28.5 score or above is needed for a site to be placed on the NPL.

Citizens living near the sites say they are concerned that state officials are interested in keeping the sites open and operating because they provide a significant number of jobs to the communities. These sources also contend that citizens who are concerned about contamination at the sites are discouraged from speaking out publicly because they will be accused of trying to destroy an economic base within the community.

The sites are Energy Department facilities, and DOE retains liability although private corporations are responsible for operations, according to a Kentucky state official. DOE leases the facilities to the U.S. Enrichment Corporation, which was created by an act of Congress for the purposes of enriching uranium for nuclear power plants. The legislation that created the USEC calls for the corporation to be privatized eventually, but that has not yet occurred. The state source says the USEC does not actually run the facilities. DOE sources could not be reached for comment on the sites.

A citizen living near the Paducah site calls the facility "the worst environmental disaster in this state." This source says 12,000 acres of groundwater are contaminated. The contaminants include trichloroethylene, polychlorinated biphenyls, and technetium 99, a radioactive substance. Another source near Paducah says the groundwater contamination is "just a few hundred feet from the Ohio River." This source adds that "I don't feel like they are telling us the full extent of the problem there." A source living near the Portsmouth site says 3,800 acres are contaminated, and contends that "there's a pretty high incidence of cancer among the workers" at the facility.

These sources contend that the specter of losing the jobs provided by the facilities is being used to keep the sites open. A source near Paducah says a citizens' group, Coalition for Health Concerns, has failed to attract much public attention. "I'm told that if people [who complain] were not branded as troublemakers, we'd get more participation" from other residents, this source says, adding that citizens are accused of trying to shut down a major employer if they raise concerns about the contamination. The source also says that citizens lack adequate information and data about the facility. "Everybody keeps their

mouth shut," another source says.

Similar concerns were expressed by a source living near the Portsmouth site, who points out that "there are no other jobs here. You either work at the prison or there." This source adds that the prospect of losing employment is "scaring people" away from complaining.

A source near the Paducah site says there is also confusion about who is responsible for the plant, pointing to the fact that the USEC still has not been privatized. This source says it is difficult for citizens to determine who they are supposed to talk to about the sites.

A state source in Kentucky says he has not heard any charges that the sites are remaining open due to economic concerns. This source says there are proposals under consideration for interim remedial actions, including pump and treat for a groundwater contamination plume. "Various phases of remedial action are going on," the source says, adding that "they're not final cleanup measures, they're stop gap."

A source with a contractor at the Paducah site says there is no connection between the cleanup at the site and the operations at the site, adding that the facility is not in danger of shutting down even if it is listed on the NPL. The source adds that "As far I know, the listing is imminent," and he suggests that other factors, including the ongoing reauthorization process, could be having an effect. The source says DOE and the contractors support NPL listing of the site and have actively sought it so that Superfund and Resource Conservation & Recovery Act requirements could be streamlined. "There was a lot of duplication of effort" within environmental activities at the site, he explains.