

# EPA To Impose Standards On PVC Plant Emissions

*CAIN BURDEAU Associated Press Writer — November 6, 2009*

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency will set new nationwide emission standards for makers of polyvinyl chloride, commonly known as the plastic PVC, under a settlement with environmental groups announced Thursday.

EPA has agreed to set emission standards by July 29, 2011, for PVC manufacturers as part of a settlement with three environmental groups that sued EPA last year for failing to impose emission standards on PVC manufacturers in Louisiana.

The suit was filed in district court in Washington and the settlement was announced Thursday by Earthjustice, which handled the case for the plaintiffs. EPA declined to discuss the agreement.

There are about 24 plants across the nation that make PVC, with the majority of them in Texas, Louisiana and Delaware. PVC is a versatile plastic used in a wide variety of products, among them wire insulation, building materials and medicine containers.

Edgar Mouton, a 74-year-old retired chemical plant worker in Mossville, said he hoped EPA's actions would lead to "actual change" and not end up as nominal change, or in his words "paper change."

Mouton is with the Mossville Environmental Action Now, a group that filed the lawsuit along with the Sierra Club and the Louisiana Environmental Action Network. He was born in Mossville and he said he has watched his town become encircled by industrial facilities, among them PVC makers.

"I won't be happy until I can see the change," Mouton said. "I want to walk out of my house and breathe clean fresh air."

He alleged nearby PVC manufacturing plants had caused a number of illnesses, from cancer to diabetes, in his community.

The industry says PVC plants are safe.

"We don't believe they are causing any harm in the local communities," said Allen Blakey, the vice president of The Vinyl Institute, an industry group based in Alexandria, Va.

He said the industry has begun working with EPA to develop the standards. He said it was unknown if the new rules would cost the \$20 billion industry more money to meet new pollution control measures. Blakey added that the industry's emissions were already "extremely regulated."

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Katie Renshaw, a lawyer with Earthjustice, said PVC standards were outdated.

"This industry has been virtually unregulated, and EPA is starting virtually from the ground," Renshaw said.

She said the hope was that EPA would regulate all emissions at PVC facilities. "Dioxins, chromium, lead, chlorine, and hydrogen chloride, the whole host of chemicals," she said.

The environmental groups claimed in their lawsuit that PVC facilities were polluting streams and gardens close to Louisiana's six facilities and causing major illnesses. The suit alleged EPA had failed to follow Clean Air Act requirements to impose standards on PVC emissions.

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