

Localized study is complete

AAMJIWNAANG TEST FINDS HIGH LEVELS OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

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Aamjiwnaang's environmental committee is calling for stronger industry standards in the wake of new test results showing "alarming" levels of toxic chemicals in the air.

Committee members say the results of testing conducted Jan. 15 show high levels of five chemicals that were detected in the air along the community's border.

Environmental committee chairperson Ada Lockridge said residents have been forced to endure bizarre odours and illnesses for too long. Now, it's time for the government to start listening.

"This is scary stuff," said Lockridge.

The test sample found high levels of the toxic chemicals benzene, chloromethane, chlorobenzene, ethylbenzene and isoprene.

The community of about 900 residents is bordered on three sides by Chemical Valley industry. In all, there are 62 industrial facilities located within 25 kilometres of the reserve.

Aamjiwnaang gained international attention in 2004 after health surveys discovered that female births outnumbered males by a two-to-one ratio. Some health experts linked the skewed ratio to gender-bending chemicals.

Yet, the government has failed to act, Lockridge said.

So, the community set out to conduct its own testing. After receiving a report of a foul odour near the corner of Highway 40 and Churchill, Lockridge and others headed out to take air samples.

Lockridge said the results should finally convince the government to tighten chemical standards.

"The Ministry of Environment has to move on this. We have the proof," she said.

In fact, there are no provincial emission standards for these chemicals, said Elaine MacDonald, a senior scientist with environmental watchdog