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*The future of the Earth is in our Hands.*

# CACC NEWS

JOHN AND CARRIE WALES

Center for Environmental and Social Justice

[www.caccmi.org](http://www.caccmi.org)

## CLEANING UP 50 YEARS OF TOXIC SPILLS

The following was received by John Witucki from Ed Lorenz, a professor at Alma College and decades long Enviro Activist in St Louis Michigan.

Here is a summary of progress at the Superfund sites in St. Louis, Michigan since EPA renewed clean-up in 1998. First between 1999 and 2006 they removed 670,000 cubic yards of contaminated river sediment, with DDT wastes driving that clean-up. As river sediment was being excavated adjacent to the former Velsicol (Michigan Chemical) plant site, EPA found highly contaminated leakage from the former plant, which had been demolished in-place next to the river and covered with a clay cap in the early 1980s.

While waiting for plans to remediate the old plant site. EPA found that the soil around 90 homes in St. Louis was also contaminated with DDT and other pollutants. This led to soil removal around those houses and replacement with clean soil. Also in this interim period, we learned the city's drinking water supply (the city used well water from beneath the community) was contaminated and St. Louis had to be given a new water system (they expanded the system in adjacent Alma and created a regional water system drawing water from wells west of both communities).

In 2017 and continuing EPA began the remediation of the worst contaminants buried under the clay cap on the old plant site. One of these, dibromo chloropropane (DBCP) is both highly volatile and extremely dangerous. The remedy selected was to insert electrodes into the clay cap and boil the contaminants under the cap and process the wastes without removing the cap. Since this process used large amounts of electricity, only one acre at a time could be remediated. That process continues at a former waste dump across the Pine River from the old plant site (called the Velsicol burn pit Superfund site.),

Now in the fall 2022 and continuing into next year, EPA is going to remove at least 100,000 tons of contaminated soil on the south end of the former plant site. This soil is primarily contaminated with petroleum related wastes. Before Velsicol expanded the chemical plant into that area of the site, it was a small refinery. The full description of remediation in St. Louis can fill books, so this is an oversimplified summary of remediation by EPA and EGLE.

Another component of the Velsicol remediation, is monitoring and providing clinical responses to the human health consequences of Velsicol's operations. As you probably know, what made this site infamous was the PBB accident in 1973, when tons of a fire retardant were shipped without anyone's knowledge to an animal feed supply facility and then distributed across the state, contaminating the food chain of at least eight million people. We work with a network of partners, including the Rollins School of Public Health in Atlanta to continue human health research and responses. Because 2023 will be the 50 th Anniversary of the PBB accident, we are hosting a major gathering of citizens and experts in May to review the lessons of the PBB accident and the responses. We would welcome CACC members to participate.

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CACC is a proud member of Earth  
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## NEW CLIMATE CHANGE ARTICLE HERE!

### Climate Change and Michigan Crops

By the end of the century, we could have the climate of Georgia in southern Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

We're already seeing an impact on agriculture on our farms. The increased temperatures increase stress on plants, which brings down the yield.<sup>2</sup>

The crops that are the most vulnerable to climate change are the fruit crops. We haven't hit the point where the weather makes it unsuitable to grow fruit -- but one can imagine that in 20 or 30 years we will make it to that point. Warmer and wetter climates promote plant diseases and pest infestation, affecting quality and yield.<sup>3</sup>

Extreme rainfall events and flooding have increased during the last century, and scientists predict these trends will continue. Very heavy rain events (the heaviest 1% of storms) now drop 31% more precipitation in the Midwest than they did 50 years ago. These events are leading to more flooding, erosion, and runoff into our waterways and declining water quality. More intense storm events are resulting in negative impacts on transportation, agriculture, human health, and infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

Solutions include switching to clean energy alternatives, electrifying transportation, fight for climate policies at our local and national level and VOLUNTEERING FOR CACC. CACC has been and is now a diligent and active promoter of healthy environmental action.

Murry DeSanto, CACC Board Chairperson

<sup>1</sup> Tyler Basset is a botanist and plant ecologist with Michigan Natural Features Inventory. This organization promotes conservation of Michigan biodiversity through scientific expertise. <sup>2</sup> Kate Madigan, director at Michigan Climate Action Network <sup>3</sup> Phil Robertson, researcher at Michigan State University's Kellogg Biological Station <sup>4</sup>Michigan Climate Action Network

## **31,000 acre purchase by The Nature Conservancy thwarts rural gentrification in Keweenaw Peninsula**

The Nature Conservancy in Michigan bought 31,000 acres of land in the Keweenaw Peninsula from hedge fund owners temporarily preserving public access to a large tract of undeveloped wild land near Copper harbor. The Nature Conservancy has pledged to keep the land undeveloped and open to public recreational and historic tribal use while pursuing local and tribal management for the sustainable harvesting and recreational economic development.

The Great Lakes region and Michigan in particular face an onslaught of big money from the coasts. Covid taught us all, who could work remotely. And now, just like we view on "Yellowstone" these "coasties" with their six figure incomes are moving into our communities. Here, their lifestyle costs 10 to 50 times less, but they don't take a cut in pay. It disrupts our land values and the cost of goods--food, fuel and energy. Our towns don't have the infra-structure, resources and resiliency to handle this onslaught. The Nature Conservancy's commitment to local control and preservation, not just natural but human, is essential in buying time for our communities to plan for this invasion of unmitigated capital. Our state, counties, townships and villages never anticipated this tsunami of interest in our communities.

### **It's time to awaken!**

The Great Lakes region with its abundant water resources, fertile land, temperate climate and relatively cheap land values will be relentlessly under attack by "coasties" and world wide hedge fund managers. The promise of "offered hope" by The Nature Conservancy is that they have the resources to buy and hold large tracts of land until a local sustainable conservation plan can be developed. The Conservancy works with national environmental groups through their local chapters, Indigenous tribal governments, local economic development groups and state-wide recreational organizations to facilitate and create a locally based and run sustainable vision for the parcels purchased.

As CACC is a well founded and meagerly funded grassroots environmental organization, I believe the Board should explore opportunities to leverage our resources and contacts with The Nature Conservancy to protect and sustain the local/regional control of our water, air, land and natural resources

*Submitted by Chambre Beauvais, CACC Board Member*

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### **Michigan to become a Rocket Hub?**

- ***Michigan has spent nearly \$2.5 million and three years to study rocket launch sites***
- ***Community leaders and some state officials are concerned about lack of progress***
- ***Michigan has advantages over other states to establish commercial launches but trails them in new space race***

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Political and business leaders were over the moon when the idea of bringing rockets to Michigan gained state support in 2019. They were dazzled by the prospect of thousands of new, high-tech, well-paying jobs at potential launch sites supporting what could become a trillion-dollar commercial space industry. "This is a truly [out-of-this-world opportunity](#) that could have an enormous impact on our future," state Sen. Mike MacDonald, R-Macomb Township, said at the time.

Three years later, Michigan is still awaiting a final report from the Michigan Launch Initiative, a part of the nonprofit Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers' Association, which was paid \$2.5 million to study building launch sites. And opposition and skepticism are mounting.

Although a feasibility report isn't complete, Brown's company identified three ideal sites for Michigan's space aspirations:

- Land in Marquette County along Lake Superior for the "vertical" launch of rockets into space.

- The former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda for the “horizontal” launch of rockets after jets fly them into the stratosphere.
- The former Kincheloe Air Force Base in the eastern Upper Peninsula of Chippewa County for a command and control center to guide launches from the other sites.

Neighbors near the sites don't share Brown's enthusiasm. In Marquette County, opposition has grown because of fears that rocket crashes — [which aren't uncommon](#) — could affect the community, Lake Superior and nearby forests. The Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association and the Michigan Launch Initiative, which is hoping to bring rocket launches to the state, have a small office in a building in Sterling Heights. It's really quite remarkable that anyone would consider putting a heavy industrial facility [like a launch pad] on the coastline of the largest body of freshwater in the world,” said Dennis Ferraro, who lives about 3 miles from the selected site and leads the opposition group Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior. “It's just a horrible idea. Environmentally, it's a disaster.” In Chippewa County, officials were excited after the Michigan Launch Initiative selected the base as a command site in January 2021. However, Brown's group has yet to file for necessary permits from the Federal Aviation Administration for the project. In Oscoda, airport officials are restless and awaiting answers after Brown's group [suggested](#) the former Air Force base as a site in 2020. Airport board member Kevin Boyat said he's still hopeful, but officials can't get answers from Brown.

The turmoil comes amid what's otherwise an exciting time for space exploration. As NASA is set to [return to the moon](#) and the space industry approached [\\$500 billion last year](#), Michigan is entering the race to be a hub for launches into low-earth orbit. It has a built-in advantage because of its location, more than halfway to the North Pole from the equator, which allows for launches into “polar” orbits coveted by some commercial satellite companies.

Michigan is moving forward, even as some critics say the state is far behind others in the race to build infrastructure for the burgeoning space industry. Even with the turbulence, many remain optimistic that Michigan could capitalize on the space industry. Michigan does have great advantages, with or without launch sites, said Greg Autry, director of the Thunderbird Initiative for Space Leadership, Policy and Business at Arizona State University. He said Michigan's manufacturing legacy makes it perfectly positioned to build rockets and their components. But focusing on launch sites before identifying a rocket builder is “kind of putting the chicken before the egg,” he added.

Information taken from an article from Bridge Michigan. To read the whole article go to Bridge Michigan's Website

Submitted by Connie Beauvais, CACC Board Member

### WHEATLAND NEWS!!

The 50th Annual Wheatland Music Festival will be celebrated in Remus, MI on September 8, 9 and 10 in 2023. Guaranteed to be a fabulous music and fun filled weekend and positively a sell out! As always, for just short of 50 years, this is CACC's main fundraiser for the year. You can be a part of this and receive discounted admission among other benefits for simply volunteering for one 6 hour shift with our wonderful kitchen staff. Contact any board member for more information and to find a place on a crew where you can help this great organization. Check out our Facebook group page by scanning this QR code.



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

An in person meeting open to the public will be held on June 3, 2023 from 11 am to 2 pm in Clare, MI at the Pere Marquette Public Library. A guest speaker may be announced at a later date. You are all welcome and encouraged to attend.

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