

SIPCOT Area Community Environmental Monitors

C/o 27 Abdul Khader Street, Manjakuppam, Cuddalore 607 001

PRESS RELEASE

SCMC order blatantly ignored; SIPCOT air remains dangerously polluted

Cuddalore 31 March, 2005: Carbon Disulphide and Hydrogen Sulphide were found in the latest SIPCOT air samples, at levels 12 times and 17.3 times respectively above the US standards. A bucket sample taken downwind of Arkema Peroxides and Bayer complex by SIPCOT Area Community Environmental Monitors (SACEM) on 25 February, 2005, contained five volatile organic and sulphur compounds in total, including above mentioned chemicals that are known to cause severe nerve and brain damage especially among children. With less than three months to the deadline of the Supreme Court Monitoring Committee order to TNPCB to clean up SIPCOT industries, the result clearly indicates that air in SIPCOT is far from clean and that the SCMC order for clean up has been ignored. The results also indicate that the TNPCB has done far from anything to curb pollution in the SIPCOT area.

This is the seventh air sample taken by SACEM with the help of the bucket. The results of the previous six samples also indicated the presence of at least 22 dangerous toxic chemicals in high quantities in SIPCOT air. SACEM would be conducting a systematic odour monitoring study and taking regular samples in the next three months nearing the deadline of SCMC to industries. It has requested the Local Area Environment Committee of Cuddalore to inspect the industries in SIPCOT and also to accompany the SACEM monitors during the bucket sampling. SACEM has also offered its expertise in air sampling to LAEC, so that the violators could be pin-pointed and action could be taken against them.

SACEM has also demanded that:

- a) Given the fact that there are no infrastructure for managing hazardous waste in SIPCOT, the Government should abandon all plans of setting up new hazardous units in SIPCOT;
- b) the Pollution Control Board should set up a system of round-the-clock complaints reporting and monitoring in SIPCOT;

The air in the area south of Arkema Peroxides and Bayer Complex near Semmankuppam village was found to contain carbon disulphide, hydrogen sulphide, isopropyl alcohol, m-p xylene and toluene. All 5 chemicals cause one or more of the symptoms reported, namely headache, suffocation and stomach rumbling

For more information, contact:

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