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Study shows pollution jump

Montgomery, Jeff. **The News Journal** [Wilmington, Del] 20 May 2012.[Show highlighting](#)

Abstract (summary)

The News Journal Air-quality tests commissioned by a Delaware City citizens group show a jump in local chemical, soot and sulfur levels after the opening of the Delaware City refinery, with at least three toxic pollutants exceeding some public health limits in one spot a mile from the plant.

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The News Journal

Air-quality tests commissioned by a Delaware City citizens group show a jump in local chemical, soot and sulfur levels after the opening of the Delaware City refinery, with at least three toxic pollutants exceeding some public health limits in one spot a mile from the plant.

The results, released by the Delaware City Environmental Coalition on Saturday, included detections of the known cancer-causing compound benzene along Clinton Street at concentrations far above some protective levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Soot and sulfur dioxide also increased at one or more of the three locations monitored by a professional environmental testing firm for two-week periods in spring 2011 and 2012.

"It's something we're very concerned about," said Amy W. Roe, a University of Delaware energy and environmental policy researcher. Roe described the volatile chemical concentration increase in 2012 compared with the prior year "very, very profound."

"This gives a picture of air quality in Delaware City that isn't being captured by the state," Roe said.

Sarah Bucic, a registered nurse and one of the coalition's founders, said the results will be shared with DNREC and the refinery. Coalition members also are preparing a citizen-managed spot sampling campaign keyed to sudden odors or incidents around the community and at the plant.

PBF Energy restarted the 210,000-barrel-per-day refinery in 2011 after buying the shut-down plant from Valero Energy a year earlier with state financial aid and encouragement.

Company officials financed the first year of the two-week air monitoring work, conducted by Batta Environmental Associates. A grant from a polluter penalty fund paid for this year's monitoring.

Lisa Lindsey, spokeswoman for PBF's Delaware City and Paulsboro, N.J., refineries, said Saturday that the company had not seen or reviewed the results. DNREC officials could not be reached for comment late Saturday.

Both two-week monitoring runs were conducted at sites along Clinton Street, Warfel Street, south of the refinery, and in the community of Emerald Ridge to the northwest. All three locations are about a mile from PBF's plant. Dust and fine soot increased significantly at all three sites, particularly in Emerald Ridge. Volatile chemicals, including xylene and naphthalene, increased most in Emerald Ridge and along Clinton Street.

"What we're finding is that the air monitoring being done by the state is great, but it's being done for a different purpose," Bucic said. "We're looking at what we're breathing in our yards, on our back porches, when we're living in our houses."

DNREC air-quality monitors near Delaware City test for volatile chemicals only once every six days, Bucic said.

Delaware City Mayor John P. Bucheit III said he was "very concerned" about the results and wants to hear assessments from the refinery and the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

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