

**From:** [Vina Colley](#)  
**To:** [DOL Energy Advisory Board Information](#)  
**Subject:** Like we have been tell the board we need a full investigation Neptunium off site at the local school..  
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## Pike health commissioner calls out DOE on radioactive materials found at school

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### Public forum set for Saturday

By Tom Corrigan - [tcorrigan@aimmediamidwest.com](mailto:tcorrigan@aimmediamidwest.com)

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In response to information released by the Department of Energy and later reported on by the Portsmouth *Daily Times*, the Pike County General Health District is holding a public forum to address concerns regarding the detection of traces of neptunium, a transuranic element and known carcinogen, at an air monitoring station on the grounds of Zahn's Corner Middle School in Piketon and part of the Scioto Valley Local School District.

The meeting is slated for 1 p.m., Saturday at the health district headquarters, 116 S. Market St., Waverley.

"It is the health district's responsibility to continue to investigate the information and is inviting members of DOE, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Department of Health, and the public to attend Saturday's forum," Pike County Health Commissioner Matt Brewster said in a press release announcing the forum.

"It is our belief, based on DOE documentation, that neptunium is on the Portsmouth reservation and has reached the air monitoring station as a likely result of activities related to the construction of the waste disposal facility," Brewster continued, referring to the ongoing construction of a controversial permanent waste disposal site planned as the part of the ongoing demolition of the defunct Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant.

The disposal facility is intended to store leftover equipment and demolished construction materials from the plant. DOE contends the on-site facility allows the greatest opportunity for economic redevelopment of the plant site. Opponents refer to the disposal facility as a "radioactive waste dump." Pike County health authorities passed a resolution opposing the waste facility in 2017.

As they blame construction of the disposal site for the presence of neptunium near the middle school, the department is calling on DOE to immediately suspend construction of the waste facility.

“Information independent of DOE data has confirmed contamination above ordinary background levels at properties near the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, including adjacent to the Zahn’s Corner Middle School,” Brewster added. “While it is premature to determine the health impacts of the contamination discovered thus far, this forum is the first step we will take to ensure the health and safety of our residents is protected.”

The presence of neptunium in the air at the middle school was first made public by DOE in its 2017 Annual Site Environmental Report (ASER) which was released in January of this year.

The ASER specifically talks about neptunium-237 being found at the school. The ASER states the amount found was 0.08 percent of the acceptable standard for the radioactive material. A vocal opponent of the waste disposal facility, Piketon Village Councilman Dennis Foreman immediately blasted the report of any neptunium at the school, no matter how small the amount. Foreman told the *Daily Times* there is no logical reason for any radioactive materials to be present in the air near a public middle school.

While Foreman has long expressed opposition to the permanent waste facility, Pike County Commissioner Jerry Miller stated until recently he was willing to give DOE the benefit of the doubt.

“Based on recent events outlined in a Portsmouth *Times* article..., I have to speak,” Miller wrote in a Facebook post.

Miller first blasted DOE for what he said was a lack of reporting on a fire which took place in a plant building March 14. That fire was touched on in a recent *Daily Times* article.

“This fire was explained as an expected and planned for reaction to an exothermic (heat generating) activity,” Miller wrote in his post, referring to an explanation of events offered by DOE spokesperson Yvette Cantrell.

“Simply put, there was a fire,” Miller continued. “If it happened, and it did, why not explain it immediately instead of a consistent effort to share the bare minimum amount of information ... My point is this is not a trust building event and the handling of it is a predictable minimization of it and any risk the event may have created. Unacceptable.”

Miller went on to note the ASER released in January covered 2017.

“Why a two-year delay for Pike County to find this out and more importantly, how much radioactive material is acceptable for your child? I agree completely with the opinion that ZERO radioactive material is acceptable in or near our schools.”

While Brewster reiterated representatives of DOE, the Ohio EPA and the state department of health all were invited to the upcoming meeting, as of Thursday, only DOE had agreed to send a representative. Cantrell did not respond to a request for comment for this story.

