



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

October 29, 2010

Bob Palmer, Chairman
Alachua County Environmental Protection Advisory Committee

Dear Mr. Palmer:

Thank you for your involvement on behalf of Gainesville residents regarding the Cabot-Koppers hazardous waste site and for copying me on your October 15, 2010 letter to EPA's Scott Miller.

Producing a rigorous and defensible health survey around a hazardous waste site is a large and complex undertaking. As you point out, some past surveys have been neither scientifically valid nor applicable to public health. Challenges to performing a valid and useful survey are many and include an inability to accurately recall past symptoms/illnesses, inability to independently confirm self-reported symptoms/ illnesses, recall bias, multiple causes of symptoms/illnesses, the small population of potentially exposed people, and the lack of prevalence/incidence data on comparable populations for non-reportable diseases. Because of these difficulties, Florida DOH generally does not recommend health surveys. Absent a plan to effectively address these obstacles, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) does not anticipate participating in a health survey around the Cabot-Koppers site.

The Florida DOH does, however, plan to examine the Florida Cancer Data System for cancers in the Cabot-Koppers area. Also, in two published reports, Florida DOH evaluated the health risk of surface soil of the Stephen Foster neighborhood. Florida DOH will continue to evaluate the risk as more soil test results become available. Florida DOH recommended posting of signs and construction of an effective barrier to prevent trespassing on the City easement adjacent to Koppers site. In a draft report, Florida DOH examined the health risk from sediments in nearby creeks. Florida DOH reviewed EPA's site remediation plan and recommended watering to suppress dust generation on the site.

Thanks again for your involvement on behalf of Gainesville residents. Please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Merchant".

E. Randall Merchant
Environmental Administrator
Bureau of Environmental Public Health Medicine
Toll Free 877 798-2772

Cc: Scott Miller, EPA
Kelsey Helton, DEP

Anthony Dennis, Alachua CHD
John Mousa, Alachua CEPD