

0. DECEPTION REIGNS - Story Preface

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Before it issued the flyer, PG&E met with the people of Hinkley on April 25, 1988.

During the meeting, defendant [PG&E] told citizens that there was "No risk at current levels" and "Generally, site groundwater is good and suitable for drinking and agriculture." (Plaintiffs' Trial Brief)

Company officials made notes of the April meeting. They

...arrogantly characterized the audience in internal memos as "Residents," "Local Politicos," and "Tort Law Suits." (Plaintiffs' Trial Brief)

Knowing the Water Board wanted a Risk Assessment to be completed:

Defendant's Blackboard Notes for a meeting on the contamination blatantly state that it wants the Risk Assessment to support the lack of public health or environmental risk. (Plaintiffs' Trial Brief)

It would be pretty difficult to reach such a conclusion when the pollution was so massive.

How did PG&E officials respond to direct questions posed by the citizens of Hinkley who attended the meeting? What about the "green swimming pool water" at their homes? Was it safe for children to swim in green water? Here's how company representatives responded:

- It was okay for people to swim in a pool where chrome 6 concentrations were higher than EPA limits
- It was fine to swim in the pools because chlorine and other pool chemicals "kill any contaminants in the pool, including chromium"
- The "water supply was completely safe and there were no toxic problems with their water."

One official even "represented that he and his children would gladly drink their well water."

As a result, the people of Hinkley who lived in the path of the contaminated plume continued to use the groundwater and remained on their property where they continued to be exposed to dangerous levels of a cancer-causing chemical.

Until the lawsuit.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DECEPTION-REIGNS-Brockovich-Erin>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DECEPTION-REIGNS-Brockovich-Erin>