

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



# Tonawanda New York Community Air Quality Study and Evaluation of the Tonawanda Coke Facility

Community Update

November 2009

## TIMELINE

- June 2009  
Hazardous waste inspection (known as RCRA) conducted
- Late August 2009  
EPA receives response from Tonawanda Coke on DIAL testing and on stack tests.
- September 2009  
Samples taken to support hazardous
- September/October  
EPA assesses both the objections to the DIAL testing and the specific test protocols for the stack tests.
- October 2009  
Information request letter sent as part of hazardous waste inspection. Response due December 4, 2009.
- October 30, 2009  
EPA sends response to Tonawanda Coke regarding the emissions testing required.
- November 30, 2009  
EPA to receive Tonawanda Coke's revised stack test protocols and protocol for DIAL testing
- March 31, 2010  
EPA's response requires DIAL testing to begin at Tonawanda Coke and complete the three stack tests.
- April 30, 2010  
EPA response requires completion of DIAL testing.

## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is very active in your community and we wanted to take a moment to let you know what we are doing. First, EPA funded a study of air quality in your area and second, the Agency is engaged in an assessment of Tonawanda Coke's compliance with federal and state environmental laws and regulations. This is an update of EPA's activities.

## EPA EVALUATION

As a result of the air quality study and because of concerns expressed by the community, EPA is conducting a full multifaceted evaluation of the facility to determine its compliance with federal laws and regulations. As part of this evaluation, EPA is requiring the company to provide information about its processes and to conduct two types of testing. The Agency asked the company to submit protocols for these tests, which must meet EPA requirements to ensure that they are done properly. The tests are a crucial part of EPA's investigation and will give us critical specific information about emissions of pollutants from the facility, which will inform our decisions about appropriate next steps, including potential legal action. The company has responded to EPA by objecting to the state-of-the-art tests that we are requiring. The company has given us protocols for the other tests.

## RECENT ACTIONS

EPA has sent our response to Tonawanda Coke's objections, as well as to specific testing protocols that they submitted to EPA for some more traditional testing.

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EPA has rejected Tonawanda Coke's objections to performing the sophisticated testing called "differential absorption light detection and ranging," or DIAL. EPA is requiring the company to develop a protocol for this testing and submit it to EPA by the end of this month. It should be noted that the only vendor of DIAL equipment is based in the United Kingdom and the equipment is scheduled for use at a refinery in Texas this winter. EPA is recommending that Tonawanda Coke contact the manufacturer to arrange to use the equipment while it is in the U.S. Given the schedule, this testing would likely occur after the scheduled tests in Texas. In addition, extreme weather conditions could affect the equipment and also the results from the testing. Therefore, EPA is requiring that this testing be completed by April 30, 2010.

EPA is also requiring significant changes to the protocols for the more traditional testing of "stacks" and of the ammonia still. We are requiring that these changes be made to the protocols and be resubmitted to EPA by the end of this month. Because these emission tests require sampling at the top of the stacks, the construction of test platforms and ports in the stacks are necessary. EPA is recommending that construction begin immediately and is requiring the completion of these tests by March 31, 2010.

### ONGOING EVALUATION

While EPA is working to ensure that these emissions tests are done properly, it continues to investigate other aspects of the facility, including its compliance with water, hazardous waste and toxics rules and regulations.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Public participation is essential to the success of EPA's community involvement program. If you have any questions regarding EPA's activities in Tonawanda, please contact: Mike Basile, EPA Public Affairs Specialist, Western New York Public Information Office, 716-551-4410 or e-mail to [basile.michael@epa.gov](mailto:basile.michael@epa.gov). For copies of the recent EPA letters to Tonawanda Coke and attachment, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/region02/capp>

