

Suits Filed Against Ky. Glass Plant Operators

The Associated Press

DANVILLE, Ky. (AP) -- Federal lawsuits claim hazardous wastes from a glass manufacturing plant in Danville endangered the health of employees and neighbors over a period of decades.

The Lexington Herald-Leader reports (<http://bit.ly/18LEc00> [1]) that attorneys filed two lawsuits Wednesday against operators of the old Phillips North American Lighting plant. The lawsuits seek class-action status.

One lawsuit alleges the plant operators "illegally, recklessly or negligently" dumped hazardous substances outside the boundaries of the property. The lawsuit also said contamination spread through at least a 5-mile radius around the facility, exposing people to increased risk of cancers, kidney failure and damage to the central nervous system.

One claim is for Gay Bowen, who lived near the plant for more than 25 years, and a Danville company called Modern Holdings LLC. Their lawsuit is against Phillips Electronics North America; its parent company, Royal Phillips, headquartered in The Netherlands; and Corning Inc.

The other is for Elbert Cox Jr., who worked at the plant for 28 years. Cox's suit is only against Phillips.

Bowen was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1995 and Cox with colon cancer in 2008, the lawsuits said. Modern Holdings claims contamination from the old glass plant has hurt its property value.

Bowen's lawsuit seeks medical monitoring for people in the affected area. It also seeks compensatory and punitive damages, and a judge's order that the hazardous substances be cleaned from plaintiffs' property. Cox's lawsuit seeks damages and medical monitoring.

Corning built the factory in 1952 and made glass products there for decades before selling the plant to Phillips in 1983. Phillips operated the plant until it closed in 2011, then sold it back to Corning, according to the lawsuit. The plant once employed about 400 people.

George J. Miller, an attorney for Corning, declined comment on the litigation. Phillips did not immediately return an email and a call to a spokesman seeking comment.

The state earlier this year approved a \$6.5 million tax incentive for Corning to buy the plant for a new glass-making operation that could ultimately employ 100 people. The plant has not resumed production.

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