



# From Love Canal to SARA: How Did it Happen?

Labor's HAZWOPER Worker Health and Safety  
Policy Initiative, 1979 - 1986

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# A Love Canal Homeowner Protesting the Chemical Dump Behind His Home



“How do you balance the conflict between jobs and cleaning up the environment?” Congressman Al Gore (D. Tn)

“To me the health of myself and my family is the most important thing. No job is worth your life.”

Dennis Virtuoso, President, Local 12256 USWA, Grief Bros., a plant that bordered the chemical dump

“When you see children such as Susie who cannot breathe at night and who have skin rashes, to me this is a crime. There have been no criminal charges yet to any Hooker official. ... These people are dumping their chemicals all over the place and nothing has happened to these people.

They are polluting our air. They are ruining our environment. They are killing our people. If that is not a crime, I do not know what is.”

- Dennis Virtuoso

“About 1952, Hooker started a landfill dump just over the fence from National Lead Industries. They would dump drums into the pit and then cover them up with dirt. Some would blow up and fly up in the air. Fumes would come out of the dump and cover the department and sometimes the plant.

In the early 1970s all of the sudden we had 8 cancer patients. Respiratory ailments, cancer, and heart trouble seemed to be on the increase. For the number of employees, these ailments seemed too high.”

“...You must do something to make this great country of ours a safe place for our grandchildren and our great grandchildren.”

**Carl Sabey, Pres. Local 12230, USWA**

**The hazardous waste crisis emerges**

**OCAW & USWA testify in Congress**

**Sections in CERCLA & RCRA**

**AFL-CIO gets involved in Superfund Reauthorization**

**WETP starts – 11 initial awardees**

**NIOSH begins HHEs**

**Congressional Hearings – Unions make the case**

**\$20M – and 5 more awardees**

|              |             |             |                  |                  |             |                        |                        |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>1970s</b> | <b>1979</b> | <b>1980</b> | <b>1981-1984</b> | <b>1985-1986</b> | <b>1987</b> | <b>1989 &amp; 1990</b> | <b>1992 &amp; 1995</b> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|

**Labor & Environ Coalitions OSHA, TSCA, RCRA, CERCLA CAA**

**AFL-CIO pushes OSHA, NIOSH, AND EPA**

**MOU between 4 agencies, and they develop H&S measures and resources**

**SARA is law, with Sect 126. \$10M for WETP. HAZWOPER standard from OSHA / EPA**

**DOE grants & MWTP / EJ awardees**

# The Policy Initiative: 3 Directions Converge

- AFL-CIO S&H Dept. – Working toward an OSHA standard
  - Language in CERCLA, RCRA
  - Pursuing the four agency effort
- IAFF & NIOSH – Firefighter protection
- Building trades unions, IUOE, LIUNA, IBT see a H&S training grant program for hazardous waste workers as an organizing strategy



10/11/2007

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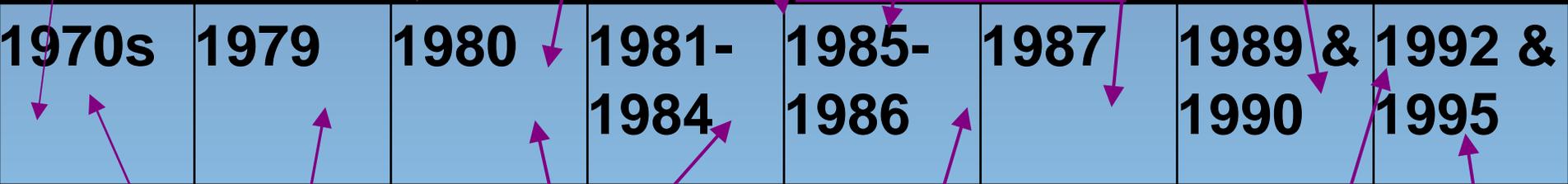
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