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Kraft Foods to pay \$8.1m in pollution lawsuit

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Kraft Foods has said it will pay \$8.1m to settle a class action lawsuit over air and groundwater pollution from an Attica, Indiana facility, which was caused by the site's former owner.

In a 2009 lawsuit, 130 Attica residents complained that chemicals known as TCE and PCE from Radio Materials Corporation (RMC), the previous owner of a nearby factory, had leached into groundwater, and the chemicals had then vaporized and seeped upward into their homes.

In 1999, RMC, which made ceramic capacitors for electronics, had entered into an agreement with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate and rectify contamination caused by decades of chemical dumping into unlined pits. RMC went out of business in 2001 and lacked the funds to complete this work, but Kraft Foods agreed to take on the investigation and remediation process when it took over the plant in 2002.

A US District Court judge in Indianapolis approved the \$8.1m settlement on Friday. In addition to the payout, Kraft has also agreed to pay to clean up the plant site, deal with the groundwater contamination and install mitigation units in affected homes.

Although the company has agreed to take on responsibility for the contamination, Kraft Foods has denied any liability for of the air and water pollution, as it did not own the facility when the chemicals were being used.

Both TCE (trichloroethylene) and PCE (tetrachloroethylene) are classified as probable human carcinogens, and both are common soil contaminants.

Norm Berger, an attorney for the families from the law firm Varga Berger Ledsky Hayes & Casey, was quoted as saying: "*Kraft's commitment to make sure the problem is completely resolved is the responsible thing to do.*"

The suit is Stoll, et al, vs. Kraft Foods Global, Inc.

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