

Citizens group: Radiation from Grumman plume needs to be addressed

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BETHPAGE - A citizens group called Long Island Pure Water held its first public meeting to share with residents what it's learned about the area under the former Grumman site in Bethpage.

James Rigano, an attorney representing the 70-member group, says radiation from the toxic plume is in the groundwater and must be addressed.

The group has filed a lawsuit against the Navy and the state Department of Environmental Conservation in an effort to have the radiation investigated.

"The Navy and the DEC have refused to investigate it. They have no plans, they have no intentions to investigate it and they would just let it go and be silent about it," said Rigano.

The Navy has said that the radium found in the plume occurred naturally and that they are continuing to monitor it. Environmentalists have argued that the levels of radium found are far from natural.

Geologist Nick Valkenberg says that the Navy based its conclusion on 1,270 samples – but he says none of them were collected on Long Island.

Among those in attendance was Pat Stuart of Bethpage, who says six of eight of her family members have cancer. She says she doesn't know whether the former Grumman site is to blame.

"I think the amount of time that they've known about this, they could be doing better," Stuart says. "They're dragging their heels, and there's a lot of people's lives at risk here."

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