

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND THEIR CONNECTIONS TO DOW

Many public officials representing residents with dioxin-contaminated property in Midland and Saginaw counties have ties to Dow Chemical Co., the source of the pollution that was released from Dow smokestacks and from pipes into the Tittabawassee River decades ago. Environmentalists say the ties make it difficult for the politicians to be objective. "Obviously, these connections are troubling," said Tracey Easthope, environmental health director with the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor. "I don't think campaign contributions necessarily buy votes, but they certainly buy access. And the behavior of these elected officials certainly suggests this access has been important." The politicians — many of whom are raising families in or near contaminated areas — say it's insulting to suggest they would put their families at risk for campaign donations or other personal benefit.

TIES TO DOW	U.S. Rep. David Camp, R-Midland	State Rep. John Moolenaar, R-Midland	State Sen. Mike Goschka, R-Brant	State Rep. Jim Howell, R-St. Charles	State Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland	Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Chester
HOW HE'S INVOLVED	Met with Gov. Jennifer Granholm to discuss the dioxin issue this summer. Has met with federal regulators to discuss the Midland/dioxin situation.	Cosponsored legislation currently pending that would raise the residential soil contact standard for dioxin from 90 to 1,000 parts per trillion. Introduced a budget amendment this year that would have prohibited the state from testing for dioxin contamination anywhere in Michigan. The amendment failed.	Publicly critical of the state Department of Environmental Quality's approach to the contamination.	Visited federal health officials in Atlanta to discuss the dioxin problem. Supports exposure studies before development of a cleanup plan.	Cosponsored legislation currently pending to raise the residential soil limit for dioxin from 90 to 1,000 parts per trillion.	Chester's department oversees the cleanup and remediation of Dow's dioxin pollution and has been criticized for aiming to impose unrealistically harsh standards.
WHAT HE SAYS	"I'm raising three children in Midland. We are at the soccer field on weekends. To say I'm more interested in my stock holdings than the lives of my children is ridiculous."	"I'm raising six children in this area that is being affected. No one is more concerned about their health than I am."	"I can't help where I work. My allegiance is to the people in my district."	"There's too much emotion surrounding this issue. I'm trying to get the emotion out of it."	"I'm honored that people in my community support my campaign effort. If some of them come from the largest employer in the county, that doesn't surprise me. Health and safety are my top concern."	Family connections "absolutely have no bearing" on his or the department's position.