**One Year After Spill That Contaminated Drinking Water, West Virginia Legislature Tries to Roll Back Chemical Regulations**

**Newsweek**

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Around this time last year, 300,000 residents in Charleston, West Virginia couldn’t drink or bathe in their tap water. Last January, roughly 10,000 gallons of [a largely unknown chemical](http://www.newsweek.com/many-disasters-behind-west-virginia-chemical-disaster-227704) called "crude-MCHM" had spilled into the water supply from an old, crumbling storage tank.

According to Paul Ziemkiewicz, the director of the West Virginia Water Research Institute, West Virginia’s lax *(limited)* regulation of above-ground tanks was the main culprit behind the spill last year.  “If these tanks had been properly maintained and inspected, and if the secondary containment system had been as well, then [the chemical] would never have gotten off this site. That’s where the attention has to be paid,” Ziemkiewicz said around the time of the spill, emphasizing that the state badly needed rigorous tank requirements to prevent another spill disaster.

1. According to the article, who is at fault for the leak of contaminants from the tank?

Six charged in West Virginia water contamination

Almost one year after water for more than 300,000 West Virginia residents was contaminated because of a chemical spill, six former officials for the company responsible for the leak are facing federal charges.

Seven-thousand gallons of a toxic chemical called MCHM leaked into the Elk River in West Virginia river on January 9, 1½ miles upstream from a water treatment facility. The Elk River supplies the city of Charleston with water. A do-not-use order was issued to 300,000 residents, some of whom could not drink or bathe in their water for more than a week.

The chemical MCHM is commonly used in the coal mining industry for cleaning, and was kept in tanks next to the river by the company Freedom Industries Inc. Several holes were found in the tank that leaked into the river.

The Freedom Industries president at the time was Gary Southern, 53, who was indicted on charges of negligent *(failure to take proper care in doing something)* discharge of a pollutant in violation of the Clean Water Act, among other alleged *(supposed)* violations. He also faces separate federal charges of wire and bankruptcy fraud. If convicted on all charges, he could face nearly 70 years in prison.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said the Department of Justice was committed to vigorously enforcing the Clean Water Act.

"...The conditions at the Freedom Industries facility were not only grievously *(horribly)* unacceptable, but unlawful," Holder said in the statement. "They put an entire population needlessly at risk."

2) Do you believe that the sentences (*punishment)* for Gary Southern are just? Why or why not?

Homework

Research water filters made out of sand, charcoal, and gravel.

1) How much did they use of each material (sand, gravel or charcoal)?

2) What contaminants were they trying to filter?

List your source: