

Ten Titanic Tales by Titan America

Titanic Tale # 1: In May of 2008, Titan's Director of Business Development, Marino Papazoglou, met with concerned citizens and local environmental groups to talk about Titan America's plans to build a cement plant in Castle Hayne (called Carolinas Cement Company). When asked how much mercury Titan planned to emit, Mr. Papazoglou said it would be between their Florida plant (around 100 lbs./year) and their Virginia plant (around 10 lbs./year).

Truth: According to Titan's draft air permit application, up to 263 lbs. of mercury will be emitted per year--more than 2.5 times greater than Florida's plant. If built today, this would be the 10th highest mercury-emitting cement plant in the US. EPA data confirms that cement plants are among the worst polluters in this country. Mercury exposure in humans has been linked to a wide array of serious health problems, including neurological damage, liver and heart disease, autism, dyslexia, and blindness. Small exposures of this toxin to pregnant women can lead to birth defects, mental retardation and IQ loss in their children.

Titanic Tale # 2: During the same meeting, Mr. Papazoglou stated that no hydrochloric acid (HCL) would be emitted from the Castle Hayne plant.

Truth: According to Titan's draft air permit application, up to 62,853 lbs. of HCL will be emitted. Cement plants emit over 15,000 tons of HCL per year which can cause health problems including throat and tongue irritation and spasms of throat and tongue tissues that can cause suffocation and even death. EPA has no limits for HCL emissions from cement plants.

Titanic Tale # 3: During the same meeting, Mr. Papazoglou stated that there would be no benzene emitted from their Castle Hayne plant.

Truth: According to Titan's draft air permit application, up to 6,789 lbs. of benzene will be emitted per year. Benzene is highly toxic and can cause immune system suppression, cancer and damage to the central nervous system. Titan was recently involved in litigation in Florida over suspected benzene contamination of Miami's Biscayne aquifer, the primary drinking water source of the city. (Source: U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT, No. 07-13297-F, SIERRA CLUB, et al., Plaintiffs--Appellees)

Titanic Tale # 4: In August 2008, on WAAV radio's Rhonda Bellamy show, Mr. Papazoglou said the height of the Castle Hayne main stack would be approximately 20 stories tall.

Truth: According to Titan's draft air permit application, the main stack will be 410 feet--or 40 stories tall.

Titanic Tale # 5: During a June 2nd New Hanover County Commissioners meeting, a concern was raised about the three elementary schools that fall within five miles of Titan's Castle Hayne site. The plant manager for Titan's Roanoke plant responded that many schools are within close proximity of their Virginia cement plant and this has not been a concern.

Truth: According to the Botetourt School Board's website, the closest school to Titan's Virginia plant is 4.7 miles away. The enrollment for this school is approximately 400 students. Compare this to 5,000 children, the projected number of children expected to attend New Hanover schools within five miles of Titan's Castle Hayne cement plant. When comparing population density, New Hanover County has 805 persons per square mile. Botetourt County has 56 persons per square mile.

Titanic Tale # 6: In his interview with Rhonda Bellamy, Mr. Papazoglou said Titan’s cement plant would bring no significant increase in truck traffic to the Castle Hayne area. He explained this was because the traffic inputs were about the same for Titan and Martin-Marietta and that the Titan plant would begin operation about the same time Martin-Marietta’s operation was ending.

Truth: Traffic data from Titan’s draft air permit application lists 174,036 total truck trips per year. This equals 476 total trips per day. A spokesman for Martin-Marietta estimates their current truck traffic at approximately 100 trucks per day. Titan also plans to use 100-ton trucks at their quarry site. The largest trucks used by Martin-Marietta are 22-tons.

Titanic Tale # 7: On the same Rhonda Bellamy show, concerns over carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from cement plants brought this response from Mr. Papazoglou: “There is no better antidote to battling CO2 than planting trees.”

Truth: According to the EPA, one tree left to mature for ten years will sequester approximately 23 lbs. of CO2 from the atmosphere. Titan wants to make 2.3 million tons of cement each year. For every ton of cement made, a ton of carbon dioxide is produced. This means Titan would have to plant 198,275,862 trees every year to sequester their carbon emissions. Put another way, they would have to plant 396,551 acres of pine trees, an area nearly three times the size of New Hanover County.....each year.

Titanic Tale # 8: Again, on the Rhonda Bellamy show, Mr. Papazoglou said the final cement product will be shipped via the following methods: 60-70% by rail and 30 % by truck.

Truth: Titan’s draft air permit application states that cement will be shipped via the following method: 38% by truck; 42 % by rail; 20 % by barge.

Titanic Tale # 9: Mr. Papazoglou stated there would be no visible plume from the Castle Hayne plant.

Truth: A “visible plume ” is referenced throughout Titan’s draft air permit application. Under NOx control technology, specific reference is made to the formation of a “highly visible plume under certain weather conditions ” as well as temperature changes in the kiln that “may result in a detached visible plume at the main stack.”

Titanic Tale # 10: At the June 2nd County Commissioners meeting, Mr. Papazoglou said: “We will not come in and affect the environment in any way, shape or form. Unless we make sure this is the case, we will not build this facility.”

Truth: In official comments (dated August 6th, 2008) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service raised serious concerns about Titan’s proposed cement plant and mine. “We believe the forested wetlands that would be impacted over the course of plant operation at the Castle Hayne site may represent an aquatic resource of national importance (ANRI). Adverse impacts to these resources may be unmitigable. As such, we request that the planning process develop alternatives with less environmental impact.”