



We Are All Exposed to the Toxins Spilled in Houston

SITUATION

On Friday May 11, an oil tanker and two barges collided in the Houston Ship Channel. The collision sent thousands of barrels of toxic reformate into the water. Reformate is made up of toxic carcinogenic aromatics which include benzene, xylene and toluene. This comes just two months after these same toxic chemicals burned at a petrochemical fire near Houston. These chemicals are extremely dangerous and can pose serious health threats to people and marine life.

FACTS

Benzene, toluene and xylene are toxic aromatic chemicals added to gasoline to boost octane. The Environmental Protection Agency classifies these chemicals as hazardous air pollutants, even though they make up 25% of gasoline.

While in these Texas disasters, there is an oily film on the water or a cloud of smoke that hovered over parts of Houston, these toxic aromatic compounds escape into the air every day from the 263 million automobiles on the road. You just can't see it. Due to gasoline's incomplete combustion, toxic aromatics escape through the tailpipe into the atmosphere as ultra-fine particulates (UFP's). UFP's are smaller than the diameter of a human hair and once released remain in the atmosphere. Moreover, they are smaller than the EPA's mandated size of particulate matter allowed in our air.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Since UFP's are so small, our body's natural defenses can't filter them out; instead, they pass through our lungs and directly enter our bloodstream. These UFPs potentially cause health issues. The Urban Air Initiative hopes both of these disasters, the spill and the fire with toxic aromatics serves as an opportunity to start a discussion about the need to reduce toxic aromatics in gasoline and protect public health.

OUR FOCUS

For years, UAI has been working to raise awareness on the need to reduce toxic aromatics in gasoline because cleaner options exist, such as biofuels like ethanol.

Find more info:
fixourfuel.com