

## The Truth About Owens Corning's Facility and Permit

**Myth:** HCFC-142b is the only available blowing agent that Owens Corning can use to create its polystyrene foam insulation board.

**Facts:**

- Alternative processes are currently available and are currently being used by other polystyrene foam board manufacturers.
- EPA has specifically approved other alternatives that could be used in the foam-blowing process.
- Owens Corning is wrong when it says that these alternatives do not exist.

**Myth:** Oregon citizens should not worry about this permit because Owens Corning has agreed in the draft permit to not use HCFC-142b after January 1, 2010.

**Facts:**

- HCFC-142b is a powerful ozone depleting substance. Once it is emitted, it will persist in the atmosphere for 17.9 years. During that time, it will effectively destroy a significant number of protective ozone molecules.
- HCFC-142b is also a powerful greenhouse gas. The annual emissions from Owens Corning's facility will have the equivalent effect on the atmosphere of adding 82,000 cars each year to Oregon's roads. If the facility operates for five years, this will be like adding 410,000 new cars to Oregon's roads.
- DEQ claims that it has no authority to deny Owens Corning a permit, require Owens Corning to use an alternative substance in its manufacturing process, or otherwise control its emissions.
- If DEQ is correct that it has no authority now, then it will have no authority in 5 years to deny Owens Corning's request for a permit renewal authorizing it to continue to use HCFC-142b.

**Myth:** DEQ has no authority to deny Owens Corning a permit, require Owens Corning to use an alternative substance in its manufacturing process, or otherwise control its emissions.

**Facts:**

- Oregon law specifically gives DEQ authority to deny a permit.
- Why have a Department of Environmental Quality at all if its only job is to rubber-stamp applications submitted by the industrial polluter?
- Owens Corning clearly violated the Clean Air Act's prohibition against beginning construction without a permit.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has made clear that agencies should not reward this type of violation by issuing permits, after illegal construction has begun, that would exempt the violating facility from compliance with the Best Available Control Technology (BACT).
- Despite this, DEQ is proposing to issue a permit that would not require Owens Corning to install any technology that will limit or control its emissions. This is clearly contrary to EPA's directives.

**Myth:** Owens Corning is building this facility to help the environment.

**Facts:**

- Owens Corning's environmental estimates are based on assumptions that do not apply to the Pacific Northwest.
- Owens Corning claims that its insulation reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but this claim is based on the assumption that most homes in Oregon are powered by coal or other fossil fuels.
- Most homes in Oregon are instead powered by hydropower and alternative, sustainable energy sources such as wind. These alternative energy sources do not create greenhouse gas emissions.
- Owens Corning has actively worked to avoid installing pollution control technology in its facility.
- If Owens Corning really cared about the environmental impacts of its operations, it would voluntarily install pollution control technology, voluntarily agree to implement BACT, and voluntarily use a less damaging chemical.
- Owens Corning is a member of a trade organization that is actively working to extend the use of HCFC-142b in the United States.
- Owens Corning is currently bankrupt due to its extensive use of asbestos products in the past. Its history of environmental compliance is cause for concern.

*Myth:* DEQ has taken a close look at Owens Corning's permit application and has done everything it can to protect human health and the environment from harmful emissions.

*Facts:*

- DEQ does not know if Owens Corning's operations will result in emissions of styrene. Styrene is a hazardous air pollutant that must be regulated under the Clean Air Act.
- DEQ does not know what impacts Owens Corning's operations will have on ground-level ozone.
- Destruction of good ozone in the stratosphere has the unfortunate consequence of increasing the amount of bad ozone closer to earth.
- Bad ozone (also known as smog) presents significant health risks for children, the elderly, and people with respiratory problems.
- DEQ has said that it won't consider the impact of Owens Corning's operations on ground level ozone.
- DEQ has made substantial errors throughout the Owens Corning permit process. Despite these errors, DEQ seems intent to charge ahead and issue the permit, no matter what the consequences.
- DEQ knew that Owens Corning was illegally constructing its facility and did nothing to stop it.

**Tell DEQ that you want an environmental quality agency that actually protects the environment and human health.**

**Tell Owens Corning:  
PINK IS NOT GREEN!**