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Tonawanda Coke fire needs immediate investigation and air monitoring

*Thick black smoke and a burning rubber stench concerns Clean Air members
after afternoon blaze at Tonawanda Coke*

A major fire at the former Tonawanda Coke site was reported late afternoon, August 10th, 2021. Residents in the surrounding neighborhood have posted disturbing photographs of thick black smoke plumes coming from the Tonawanda Coke Site, now owned by Jon Williams of Riverview Innovation and Technology Campus. Community members have reported a noxious odor of what smells like burning rubber during and after the fire. As of 5:15pm, the NYSDEC reported that they are working with local fire departments to assess the environmental impact of the event and whether the fire has been contained.

Clean Air Coalition of WNY is calling for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to conduct a full scale investigation into the causes of the fire, collect air samples at the site and downwind of the facility in the residential community and create a full audit of the current developer's safety management protocols. While accidents do happen, such a large scale fire is cause for concern as unaddressed hazardous waste has proven to be a major problem at the site.



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“Earlier today I was at the 7-11 on Sheridan and Elmwood Avenue in the Town of Tonawanda and I saw the huge smoke plume coming from the Tonawanda Coke site. The smell was just awful; it smelled like burning oil and rubber. I am deeply concerned about the remediation work being done at the site and want the NYSDEC to get to the bottom of this frightening situation”, Sue Kelley, Clean Air member and City of Tonawanda resident.

Clean Air members continue to have concerns about the stability of the site and its potential threat to human health and the environment. Tonawanda Coke is one of the most well known hazardous waste sites in the country. In 2014, the site was recognized as the only company in the history of the United States that was found guilty of 14 criminal accounts of violations of the Clean Air Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the federal law that governs ground contamination of hazardous waste.

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The Clean Air Coalition of WNY builds power by developing grassroots leaders who organize their communities to run and win environmental justice and public health campaigns in Western New York.