

ecumenical task force
of the niagara frontier

Love Canal Collection

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'Every mother is scared to death'

This is a copy of a letter sent to Gov. Hugh Carey:

The Love Canal is a man-made disaster that won't stop. The Love Canal can no longer be covered up and pushed aside, covered with half-truths and clay caps. The health effects are real. Miscarriages, birth defects that last a lifetime and illness are only the beginning.

In October 1979 Senator Daly and Assemblyman Murphy presented and passed a bill to allow New York State to purchase at fair market value the homes of Love Canal residents desiring to leave the neighborhood. It has been six months and not one home has been purchased. The appraisals have begun. Residents are ready to leave. Dozens of families have signed sales contracts for the purchase of new homes. But we sit and wait while the political football

Canal residents, you are wrong. The need to declare a health emergency is greater than ever.

On Tuesday, April 15, Lois Gibbs' four-year-old daughter, Missy, was admitted as an emergency patient to Buffalo Childrens Hospital. She was covered with bruises from head to foot. Her blood was not clotting and she was a very sick child. Tests for leukemia began immediately. What had caused Missy's blood platelet level to drop dangerously low to 1,000 when normal was 150,000 to 450,000? What chemicals was Missy exposed to at the Love Canal that could now be threatening her very life? Was the benzene in her home destroying her blood? Perhaps you need to be reminded that benzene is a known carcinogen and causes blood chemistry changes. Will the doctors be able to reverse the process? It remains to be

Love Canal. Why must we bury our children one by one?

Your responsibility to the Love Canal residents is greater than ever. I urge you PLEASE immediately re-evaluate New York State's role in the Love Canal. We are bitterly disappointed with your selection of task force members named to carry out the relocation and revitalization plans for the area. You had the opportunity to name individuals from any segment of the community to serve on the task force, however, you chose individuals who either knew little of the problems in the area or exhibited little interest or compassion for the residents. This is born out by the decision of the Niagara County Legislature April 15 to table a motion to participate on the task force. The Town of Wheatfield refuses to partic-

games of pass the buck continues. It has become a game of pricetags versus the lives of the Love Canal victims. The Love Canal Stabilization and Revitalization Task Force can't get its feet off the ground. The city, Town of Wheatfield and Niagara County are to be part of this task force but their short-sightedness allows them only to be concerned with future legal ramifications and financial obligations. Indecision and inaction have no place in a health hazard. If you think that the passing of the Murphy-Daly bill has relieved you of any further responsibility to the Love

seen.

Every mother in the Love Canal is scared to death, wondering who will be the next one with leukemia symptoms. Will it be her child, her neighbors' child or even herself? Every family watches and wonders what the spring thaw is washing to the surface, scared of what their children might be walking in, playing in, or falling in. Is it dioxin? Or something worse? You cannot deny the presence of dioxin in the canal, in the backyards of 97th Street and in Black Creek and the storm sewers. You cannot overlook the sickness of these innocent victims. You cannot deny the presence of chemical readings in nearly every household. You cannot help but remember the death of seven-year-old Jon Kenny, the boy that played in the dioxin contaminated Black Creek. A needless death at the

ipate on the task force if the county doesn't. It is imperative that New York State take charge. It is obvious that the local governments have failed miserably. It is not too late to declare an immediate health hazard. It is not too late to move everyone out now before any more lives are lost. You, personally, know there is a very real health hazard in the Love Canal. Dr. Axelrod has said that no level of dioxin is safe. You can stop this political football game. The lives and health of 500 families are too important to play politics. Use your influence to get us out of here now! We cannot live another day in this hell! Failure to act now will leave skeletons in your closet. The skeletons of the Love Canal victims. A needless waste!

**Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Dunmire
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