

SATURDAY MARCH 22, 2014 NZDT

[Terms](#) | [Search](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Contact us](#) | [About Us](#) |[LOGIN](#) [REGISTER](#)[BLOGS](#) [DOWNLOADS](#) [FORUM](#) [HEADLINES](#) [LINKS](#) [VIDEOS](#)You are here: [Home](#) ■ [Environment](#) ■ [Smith attacks park response](#)

Thursday, 18 June 2009 09:29

Smith attacks park response

font size

Environment Minister Nick Smith has criticised the Taranaki Regional Council for a lack of openness over the Marfell dioxin contamination.

He says the council could have been more open with the public after toxic chemicals were found in drums removed last month from New Plymouth's Marfell Park, the site of a former municipal tip.

It was nearly a month after the drums were found and only after inquiries from the media that the council revealed they contained dioxin residues from chemicals used in the manufacture of herbicides. TRC chief executive Basil Chamberlain has defended the delay, saying the council needed time to have tests done on the drums.

CATEGORIES

[News](#)[Articles](#)[Corrupt and fraudulent practices](#)[Crime](#)[Environment](#)[Featured](#)[Health](#)[International News](#)[Laws and Amendments](#)[Opinion](#)[Politics](#)[Your Rights](#)

Dr Smith called for a briefing last week after it emerged the drums contained tetrachlorobenzene and trichlorophenol, used by herbicide manufacturer Ivon Watkins-Dow.

"I do think that the TRC needs to learn that openness around such sensitive issues is important and in hindsight I think they could have been more open with the community when these chemicals were found," Dr Smith told the Taranaki Daily News.

"I hope that the TRC has learnt from that because it only raises unnecessary suspicion when significant information is kept from the public."

Dr Smith said the "next significant issue" would be to follow up on any new information about chemicals that might have been dumped in New Plymouth.

"If any new information comes forward, I am of the view that the TRC would pursue that with vigour."

Mr Chamberlain took some issue with the minister's criticism. "With respect, we do believe we were open with the public," he said.

"There was a few days' delay after we got results, and I accept that, but the issue is we had to have the tests taken and that took time to get the tests back.

"We like to deal in fact."

There would be a debrief when the issue was worked through "and we will look to take lessons from that", Mr Chamberlain said.

Dr Smith repeated his pledge to assist the TRC with any clean-up.

"I am open to considering the Government providing some support to ensure that the surrounding community can be reassured that the ex-dump, now a playground, is safe.

"[New Plymouth MP] Jonathan Young has lobbied for that support and that is something we would consider after the TRC has received quotes."

Dr Smith is also having a closer look at requirements for companies to divulge information about historic dumping of hazardous material.

It appeared there were no laws that required companies to reveal information to authorities when they could have put people's health at risk, Dr Smith said.

"Commonsense says to me there should be a legal obligation on companies like Dow Agrosiences [formerly IWD] to disclose any information they have around potential dumping of such chemicals," Dr Smith said.

While he was reassured that the company was providing such information, he was seeking legal advice this week as to whether the law needed to be strengthened.

Dioxin campaigner Andrew Gibbs said Dr Smith's comments around law changes were "encouraging" but should be taken further.

"There should be some user pays legislation around these companies," Mr Gibbs said.

In the United States, Dow had paid out US\$15m (\$NZ24m) on programmes such as blood testing and clean-ups whereas the taxpayer in New Zealand was paying the bill, Mr Gibbs said.

Stuff

Tweet { 0

Like Be the first of your friends to like this.

g+1

Published in [Environment](#)

Comments

COMMENTS

Sort by Oldest First **Sort by Latest First**

No comments found

Login to post a comment

Username Password

Remember me

[Register](#) [Forgot password](#)

[back to top](#)



COMMUNITY LINKS

- [ACClaim Otago](#)
- [ACClaim](#)
- [Whangarei](#)
- [ACC Futures](#)
- [Coalition](#)
- [ACC Kids](#)
- [Sensitive claims](#)
- [help](#)
- [THINK](#)

Copyright © 2007 - 2014. ACC claimants support network. ACCFocus.

[About Us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Search](#) | [Terms](#) |