

Issues Overview

of St. Lawrence Cement project

Founded in January 1999, Friends of Hudson combines the best attributes of grassroots groups and more established organizations by educating and informing the general public while also working closely with other local, regional, and national groups which support balanced growth in the mid-Hudson Valley.

Our more than 3,200 dues-paying members live in diverse communities throughout Columbia County and the mid-Hudson Valley.

Our mission is to promote quality of life in the mid-Hudson Valley by: protecting public health, air and water quality, as well as scenic, historic, and agricultural resources; advocating smart and balanced development; and supporting the work of our sponsor, Open Space Institute, by empowering citizens to protect their environment.

Led by a fifteen-member board, the group takes timely and responsible action, based on scientific research, legal expertise, risk/benefit analysis, and professionally-crafted plans.

Currently, Friends of Hudson has gathered over 11,000 signatures in opposition to the proposed coal-fired St. Lawrence Cement project in Greenport and Hudson, NY. The group has retained expert legal, engineering, visual, and environmental consultants to challenge the project's 17 required permits and approvals.

KEY ISSUES

- 1 Air Quality** (2 PAGES)
SLC is asking for a permit to pollute more than their Catskill plant does now.
- 2 Scale/Scope**
The facility is far too large, and sited in a highly visible and vulnerable location.
- 3 Track Record**
The company and its owners have not demonstrated a track record we can trust.
- 4 Economics**
The plant would not create jobs or spin-off benefits, and is likely to harm tax base.
- 5 Did you Know...?**
Assorted facts and figures about SLC's proposed coal-fired plant.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

for updates on our progress:
WWW.FRIENDSOFHUDSON.COM

If you would like a copy of **Stack Test**, our 25-page report on the corporate record of St. Lawrence Cement, Holnam and Holcim, send email to: **sue@mhcable.com** or call (518) 822-0334.


Issue 1

Air Quality

Detailed info on air pollution: www.scorecard.org

- ▶ **Increased Pollution.** On a yearly basis, the coal-fired Greenport plant would be permitted to emit more regulated pollutants than the existing Catskill plant. According to St. Lawrence Cement's own air permit application, the Greenport plant would be allowed to emit just under 20 million pounds of pollution per year—about 43% above the current baseline of Catskill plant emissions.

(SOURCE: SLC AIR PERMIT APPLICATION, NETTING ANALYSIS, TABLE 4-1, PAGE 4-3)

 **FACT:** *St. Lawrence Cement is asking for permission to emit an average of 55,000 lbs. of pollution every day of the year from a 400-foot stack in Greenport. If these emissions from the proposed project were divided evenly between every Columbia County resident at the end of each year, every man, woman and child would get a 300-pound sack of pollution for the holidays.*

- ▶ **Pollutants.** The regulated pollutants listed in the company's air permit application include fine particulate matter (PM₁₀), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Six out of 10 of the most hazardous substances known to government regulators are emitted by Portland cement kilns, including dioxins, furans, acid gases, heavy metals, and other Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs). Such kilns can emit:

ARSENIC, BENZENE, CADMIUM, CHROMIUM, CHLOROBENZENE, DIBENZOFURANS, DIOXINS, FORMALDEHDE, HEXANE, HYDROGEN CHLORIDE, LEAD, MANGANESE, MERCURY, NAPHTHALENE, NICKEL, PHENOL, POLYCYCLIC ORGANIC MATTER, SELENIUM, STYRENE, TOLUENE, XYLENES. (SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY)

 **FACT:** *Greene County, which has a SLC plant, has the third highest rate of lung cancer in New York State, according to the NYS Department of Health.*

- ▶ **Risks.** According to the U.S. government “Hazardous air pollutants can cause reversible or irreversible health effects including carcinogenic, respiratory, nervous system, developmental, reproductive and/or dermal health effects... Inhaling high concentrations of particulates can affect children, the elderly, and people with heart and lung diseases the most.” Studies also show that “inhaling even relatively low airborne concentrations of dust can cause or aggravate lung diseases such as asthma or emphysema, and is associated with premature death.”

(SOURCE: U.S. ENV. PROTECTION AGENCY, AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION)

* **SUGGESTION:** *To improve air quality in the region, SLC should instead move their existing Catskill plant back from the river, make it a gas-fired kiln, and keep cement production under 1 million tons of cement a year.*

Issue **1**

CONTINUED

AirQuality

► SLC wants permit for 43% more pollution

Based on St. Lawrence Cement's claims in their own Netting Analysis:
April 27, 2001 Air Permit Application, Table 4-1, Page 4-3 (pounds/year)

REGULATED CRITERIA POLLUTANT	CURRENT CATSKILL BASELINE	FUTURE TOTAL PERMIT LIMIT	CHANGE (LBS.)	MORE OR LESS?
Particulate Matter (PM TSP)	700,000	1,476,000	+776,000	2.1 times more
Volatile Organics (VOCs)	76,000	260,000	+184,000	3.4 times more
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	634,000	7,966,000	+7,332,000	12.6 times more
Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	6,272,000	1,702,000 *	- 4,570,000	3.7 times less
Nitrogen Oxides (NO ₂)	6,014,000	8,244,000	+ 2,228,000	37% more
Fluorides	520	2,740	+ 2,220	5.27 times more
H ₂ SO ₄ Mist	112,000	80,000	- 32,000	29% less
TOTAL	13,808,520	19,730,740**	+ 5,922,220	43% MORE

POLLUTANT	HEALTH RISKS
Carbon Monoxide (CO) An odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that comes mainly from motor vehicles and other combustion exhaust.	Reduces blood's ability to bring oxygen to cells/tissues. Most at risk: those with lung and heart problems.
Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) Compounds produced when fuel is burned. In the atmosphere, NO ₂ forms acidic particles and liquid nitric acid.	Lung damage, illnesses of breathing passages and lungs (respiratory system); also contributes to acid rain.
Particulate Matter (PM) Microscopic particles and tiny droplets of liquid (aerosols) which come largely from burning fuels, construction, and mining.	Nose and throat irritation, lung damage, bronchitis, early death.
Sulfur Dioxide (SOx) Created when sulfur-containing fuel (coal, oil) is burned. In the atmosphere, it can change into acidic particles/sulfuric acid.	Breathing problems and potentially permanent damage to lungs; also an ingredient in acid rain.
Volatile Organics (VOCs) Smog-forming carbon compounds which create ozone through atmospheric reactions.	In addition to ozone, many VOCs can cause serious problems such as cancer.

NOTES ON TABLE ABOVE

* Sulfur emissions would be lower if the plant were to burn gas instead of coal.

** The netting analysis does not disclose numbers for the Greenport plant's mercury, lead, beryllium or vinyl chloride, making it difficult to compare these key pollutants, which thus are not included in this table.

SOURCES (LEFT):
U.S. EPA, AMERICAN LUNGASSOCIATION

Issue 2

Scale/Setting

Frequently Asked Questions: www.friendsofHUDSON.com

► **Sprawl.** The proposed St. Lawrence Cement facility would sprawl over 2.8 square miles (1800 acres, including a 1200 acre mine). The entire City of Hudson is 2.3 square miles (1400 acres), about 25% smaller than SLC's whole property. The project would also include over 2 miles of conveyor belts through wetlands and near residential areas, with a major barge facility for 800-foot-long "Hudson Max" barges and open piles of coal next to a public park.

► **Sensitive location.** The 400-foot-tall (40-story) smokestack would rise within a mile of John L. Edwards Elementary School, Columbia Memorial Hospital, Eden Park nursing home, Cavell Cancer Treatment Center, the Hudson (Mount Ray) reservoirs, the Hudson cemetery, and densely populated residential neighborhoods in Hudson and Greenport.

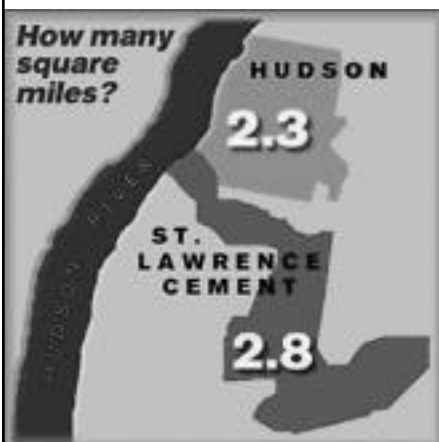
► **Visibility.** By moving the stack and silos to the old quarry off Newman Road, St. Lawrence Cement has not hidden the plant from view. A recent "balloon test" by the company backfired, demonstrating that the plant would be highly visible from a multitude of locations, including but not limited to:

FAIRVIEW AVENUE, GREENPORT
AMTRAK STATION, HUDSON
ROUTE 29, CLAVERACK
ROUTE 23B, CLAVERACK
ROUTE 9, STOCKPORT
ROUTE 9G, GREENPORT & HUDSON
ROUTE 9H, NORTH OF CLAVERACK

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HUDSON
HIGH SCHOOL, HUDSON
STONE MILL ROAD, CLAVERACK
MIDDLE ROAD, GREENPORT
WATERFRONTS, HUDSON & ATHENS
ROUTE 23, GREENPORT
LOWER WARREN STREET, HUDSON

This analysis above does not include the stack plume, which according to the company could stretch as long as 6.3 miles, visible 82% of daylight hours in winter.

► **Historic Properties.** An extraordinary number of historic sites and properties can be found in Hudson, Claverack, and both Columbia and Greene counties, with an estimated 1500 properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Last year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Hudson Valley one of the 11 Most Endangered Sites in the nation.



► **Unique Region.** The mid-Hudson Valley is also a unique repository of scenic, cultural, and ecological resources. The Hudson has been designated an American Heritage River, and the Catskill-Olana viewshed is a Scenic Area of Statewide Significance.

Issue 3

Track Record

- ▶ The North American cement plants owned and operated by **Holcim** (owners of SLC and Holnam, previously known as Holderbank) have demonstrated a terrible track record during the past decade. The chairman of the Ontario Environmental Appeals Board said that “SLC has not demonstrated an acceptable track record,” while Provincial Parliament member Margaret Marland called SLC “a major industrial polluter.” *A full report with detailed citations from independent sources, condensed below, is now available from our office, (518) 822-0334.*


	SITE	STATE	PROBLEM	YEAR
1.	Ada	(OK)	Explosion in dust collector causes \$1 million in damages	1999
2.	Artesia	(MS)	Sought an exemption from haz. waste incineration fees	1996
3.	Beauport	(Can.)	140-worker plant shut in '97; denies cleanup responsibility	2000
4.	Camden	(NJ)	New slag plant fined over \$20,000 for monitoring failures	2002
5.	Catskill	(NY)	Threatens to sue DEC if not exempted from regulatory fees	1996
6.	Clarksville	(MO)	\$100,874 fine for hazardous waste violations	1994
7.	DevilsSlide	(UT)	Excess NOx emissions found; company seeks variances	1999
8.	Dundee	(MI)	Truck driver crushed to death in mine accident \$576,500 fine for 750% excess pollution over 17 years	1998 1999
9.	Greenport	(NY)	SLC forced to admit false school tax figures in ads	2000
10.	Hagerstown	(MD)	Company pushes waste-burn plan despite local opposition	1992
11.	Holly Hill	(SC)	\$838,850 fine for waste and air emissions violations 24-year-old worker dies in mine accident	1993 1996
12.	Joliette	(Can.)	Increases tire-burning capacity by 500,000 tires a year	1998
13.	LaPorte	(CO)	Trying to unclog machinery, worker dies in 40-foot fall 60 firefighters required to stop conveyor belt fire Particulate emissions found to be twice permitted levels	1994 1996 2000
14.	Mason City	(IA)	State forces kiln to switch from coal to gas fuel	1999
15.	Midlothian	(TX)	\$223,000 fine for 15 categories of pollution, other violations \$135,000 fine for emissions 50% over permit levels	2002 1993
16.	Mississauga	(Can.)	SLC appeals order to curb emissions, upgrade plant Conveyor belt fire causes \$1.5 million in damage Study says plant is #1 Great Lakes dioxin producer SLC continues to appeal orders to fix plant	1992 1994 1996 1997
17.	Quebec	(Can.)	\$1.88 million fine for price-fixing on public projects	1996
18.	Saratoga	(AK)	Investigation exposes unpermitted company landfill	1992
19.	Theodore	(AL)	Proposes use of tire chips as fuel despite local opposition	1994
20.	W. Seattle	(WA)	\$72,615 settlement for polluting wetlands along river	1996

Issue 4

Economics

- ▶ **No new, permanent jobs for local residents.** The company's own application admits that "the proposed project would result in little net change to SLC employment." They currently have 154 workers in Catskill and Greenport. After construction, they would have 155 workers total—a net increase of just *one job*.

(SOURCE: SLC DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, PAGE 3-14)

 **Repeat, no new jobs:** "There would be no appreciable change in the workforce necessary to accommodate the new facility." (SLC DEIS, PAGE 3-18)

- ▶ **No region-wide growth.** The Environmental Impact Statement "estimates that in total, there is no new net spending in the regional economy in the future."
- ▶ **No new "indirect" benefits.** Existing workers would fill the positions. Any spin-off benefits are *already* in the community—therefore, the project does not promote any economic growth. The application says "most of the employees would be expected to remain in their current residential areas, so that shopping purchases would remain unaffected" by the new plant. (PAGE 3-19) SLC implies that either Catskill workers do not spend money at local businesses, or else will just continue to shop in the same places they already do.
- ▶ **Marginal tax contributions.** By projecting their property assessment at only \$25 million (7.5%) of their \$330 million project cost, SLC is promising scant tax benefits to the community. According to figures provided by the company, their new annual school taxes would represent only 1.1% of the total Hudson City School District 2001 Budget. A home owner assessed at \$75,000 would save *at best* \$37.50 on taxes a year—*only if* the budget does not go up another 1.1%.
- ▶ **Threat to our tax base.** Without providing any evidence whatsoever, the St. SLC application completely dismisses any suggestion that the presence of a 400-foot-coal burning stack and 1,200 acre mine would harm property values, retail traffic, tourism dollars, agriculture, high-tech industry, or any other sector of the Columbia County economy. (Real estate alone is a more than \$200 million per year industry in the County, not counting any spin-off benefits of property sales.) A visit to cement towns such as Ravena or Cementon directly contradict the notion that these plants promote economic prosperity.



Issue 5

Did you know..?

Miscellaneous facts and figures about our area and SLC

- ↳ **SOUTH BAY:** *SLC's barge facility and conveyor belts through the South Bay of Hudson would mean the final destruction of one of the Hudson River School's most famous and frequently painted vistas.*
- ▶ **Main Streets.** A December 2000 survey found 43 of 96 Catskill storefronts (45%) empty, while in Hudson only 18 of 165 (11%) were empty. Catskill has an SLC cement plant; Hudson does not. While this does not prove that the plant has hurt Catskill's economy, it does show that a cement plant is no economic miracle cure.
- ↳ **INCINERATION:** *SLC and Holnam cement kilns are often used as incinerators of garbage, tires and hazardous waste. Industry calls this risky practice "recycling." To reduce costs, the company have promoted waste "fuels" by saying that they burn cleaner than coal. Project manager Phil Lochbrunner has publicly rejected the idea of a restrictive covenant to ban this practice: first to the Hudson Common Council President, more recently to the Greenport Planning Board (6/5/01).*
- ▶ **Oops!** Due to the diligent research of a Claverack resident, SLC was forced to admit that it had inflated its school tax benefits by \$100,000 in its ad campaign, running a huge "oops!" ad.
- ▶ **Ghost Writing.** After an investigation by The Independent newspaper, SLC also had to admit that it hired a Dutchess County resident to ghostwrite letters to area newspapers.
- ↳ **EMPLOYMENT:** *According to the NYS Dept. of Labor, more people are working in Columbia County today than at any other time in the past 25 years—over 33,000 people employed. And the County has also consistently maintained one of the top three lowest unemployment rates in the State, with just 900-1000 people looking for work. This is the same number as when the Atlas was open in the early 70s.*
- ▶ **Lobbying.** While affirming that regulations protect us, two SLC employees lobbied the State Legislature in 1998 to try to get tax incentives and get-out-of-jail free cards for tire-burning cement plants. SLC has also hired an Albany insider, Lyn Mueller, to lobby for them in the Capitol.
- ↳ **OPPOSITION:** *The Hudson Teachers Association voted 57% to 43% against welcoming the plant to town. The Columbia Memorial Hospital medical staff voted 35-to-1 this spring that the plant poses "a serious risk to the health of the community." 24 business owners wrote to the Chamber of Commerce, objecting to SLC's use of a "Business After Hours" event for promotional purposes.*
- ↳ **DOUBLE STANDARD:** *According to Johannes Kaufmann of the Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C., a new coal-fired cement plant of this size could not be built in Switzerland today. SLC is owned by Swiss-based Holcim, Ltd.*
- ▶ **Legal victory.** In October 2000, Friends of Hudson won the first legal skirmish with SLC when the U.S. E.P.A. ruled that the Greenport project could not be considered part of the Catskill one. The company failed to "grandfather" its emissions by claiming that the two sites are really one.
- ↳ **SCALE:** *In 1987-88, SLC proposed opening a plant in Greenport—but they described it as a 1 million ton-per-year facility, about half the size of this proposal. The plant just does not have to be so big.*
- ▶ **Stack Test.** By moving the plant to the quarry off Newman Road, SLC made visual impacts much worse for many Greenport and Claverack residents, who may see virtually the entire plant. You can't hide a 400 foot stack in an 80-foot pit on top of a 300-foot hill.
- ▶ **Contradiction.** *Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and Congressman John Sweeney have gone after midwestern coal-burning plants, which dump pollution in the Adirondacks and Catskills. Yet SLC would burn coal.*