

East Palestine Train Derailment Draws Lawyers: Information Sessions and Client Sign-Ups Increase



Lawyers from various law firms, including MotleyRice, Morgan & Morgan, and Cory Watson, are flocking to the town of East Palestine, Ohio, following the freight train derailment that resulted in the release of toxic chemicals into the surrounding community. The New York Times and the Cincinnati Enquirer report that lawyers have been hosting information sessions, meeting with residents, collecting evidence, and filing lawsuits. As of Feb. 24, dozens of lawsuits had already been filed.

The information sessions have been held at various venues, including the Best Western, an American Legion hall, and a high school cafeteria. One law firm investigator even met with residents at a local bar. Erin Brockovich, the environmental activist known for uncovering polluted drinking water in California, also spoke at a presentation that included Texas lawyer Mikal Watts.

According to the New York Times, the cases filed concerning the derailment could be consolidated into a class action or multidistrict litigation against Norfolk Southern, the train operator. Several law firms, including Fayard & Honeycutt, have filed federal suits seeking class-action status.

One of the lawyers in East Palestine is a partner at Fayard & Honeycutt, a law firm based in Louisiana. The firm was one of four that filed a federal suit seeking class-action status, according to WPSD Local 6. The lead lawyer at Fayard & Honeycutt was also involved in a suit filed after a 1982 train derailment that released vinyl chloride, one of the chemicals released in the East Palestine derailment. That case resulted in a \$39 million settlement that also established a commission to monitor health problems and decontamination of soil and water.

"It looks like these dadgum railroads would get it right after that many years and stop falling off the tracks, but they just can't do it," said Calvin Fayard Jr., a Louisiana lawyer and a partner at Fayard & Honeycutt.

The lawyers in East Palestine are working to ensure that affected residents receive compensation for their losses, and that those responsible for the derailment are held accountable. As the lawsuits progress, it remains to be seen how the legal system will respond to this latest incident and whether transporting hazardous materials by rail will be subject to increased regulation.

REFERENCES:

Lawyers flock to East Palestine after train derailment, hosting information sessions and signing up clients