Unregulated Crystalline Silica Exposure in Wisconsin

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Introduction
Occupational silica exposure is related to the development of respiratory disease, tuberculosis, autoimmune disease, kidney disease, silicosis and lung cancer. Recent proposals for sand mines and processing plants around Wisconsin – including Chippewa Falls – have raised substantial community concerns about health risks to the public.

Industrial Sand Plants In Wisconsin
Existing Industrial size: Maiden Rock, Taylor, Portage, Fairwater, Menomonie,

Proposed, Not yet operating: Chippewa Falls, Marshfield, Town of Preston

Discussion Stage: Town of Arland, Town of Almena

Regulatory Limits
The Mine Safety and Health Administration standard is 10 mg SiO₂/m³

% SiO₂ + 2

For dust that is 100% silica, the standard would be 0.1 mg/m³

The only environmental exposure standard we found was 0.003 mg/m³ from the California OEHHA.

Health Effects of Exposure
Silicosis – a fibrosis (scarring) of the lungs. Silicosis is progressive and leads to disability and death.


Are Wisconsin Residents Protected?
The Department of Natural Resources admits that crystalline silica is a human carcinogen (Andrew Stewart, 9/09), but is not regulating it as a hazardous air pollutant (NR 445). DNR was required to provide a report by July 1, 2006 but has not yet done so. A study has now begun.

Special thanks to Beth Walton.