

April 19, 2021

State Senator Hearcel F. Craig
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Ground Floor
Columbus, OH, 43215

State Representative Dontavius Jarrells
77 South High St.
10th Floor
Columbus, OH, 43215

To: State Senator Hearcel F. Craig and State Representative Dontavius Jarrells

On Wednesday, April 7, 2021, the Yenkin-Majestic Paint Corporation at 1920 Leonard Avenue exploded, killing one person, injuring eight, and spewing ash and other debris over area homes — the closest ones located less than a mile from the site. Homes and businesses shook, and residents were breathing in toxic air for days. The long-term effects on the water and soil in this predominantly Black neighborhood are still unknown.

It has been one week since this fatal incident, and all residents have received from their elected officials are “concerns,” “prayers,” and promises of “conversation.” We are ready to begin the conversation.

We are requesting an immediate meeting with your offices to discuss the following actions in response to this incident:

- (1) A survey of the structural integrity of homes and business in the area, which residents felt shake around them
- (2) Covered health screenings for residents to measure increased levels of toxic substances and compensation for any necessary medical care
- (3) A list of actions the city will undertake following the Ohio EPA’s assessment of the water and soil conditions in the area
- (4) Immediate public disclosure of all findings by OSHA inspectors at the facility
- (5) Relocation of this 0^o to a non-residential area

The Yenkin-Majestic Paint Corporation has a long history of environmental and worker safety violations. In 1970, it exploded for the first time, and in 1999 sealant vapors caught fire in the factory. In 2011 a worker was killed after being shocked while plugging his forklift into a

charger. Later that year Yenkin-Majestic paid \$5,940 to settle complaints that led to one serious violation and four other violations. In 2012 an inspection found 16 violations, 15 of which were serious, regarding improper management of highly hazardous chemicals, including a lack of proper safety training, procedures, and auditing. Fines were negotiated from \$138,600 to \$76,203. In 2015 the company was fined \$4,851 for one serious violation of unsafe storage of materials. Some of the toxic materials stored in the facility include maleic anhydride, phthalic anhydride, xylene, and mineral spirits.

Why was a facility with so many safety and environmental violations not shut down, especially considering the residential areas in close proximity? Allowing a corporation with a track record of irresponsibly handling dangerous chemicals to remain in business next to homes and small businesses was a disaster waiting to happen - and it did.

Residents who live and work next to the Yenkin-Majestic Paint Corporation demand action to make sure this never happens again.

Sincerely,

Tiffany White
Oriole Heights

Douglas McDonald
Shephard president

Carl Lee
Argyle Park

Alfonso Hooper
Brittany Hills

Victoria Abou-Ghalioum
Sunrise Movement Columbus Hub

Columbus Stand Up!

Cathy Cowan Becker
Simply Living

Andrew Lin

Columbus Socialist Alternative

Freedom BLOC

Rachel Wagner
Ready for 100 Columbus

Mayda Sanchez
Ohio Sustainable Business Council

Gary Cox
Our Revolution Central Ohio

Ohio Youth for Climate Justice

Chandler Rupert
Students for a Democratic Society, Ohio State University chapter