




Track your code, bugs, and work. Anywhere.



AdChoices GET STARTED

State IDs Faulty Tanks; Now Tank Law Is Being Scaled Back

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — May 2, 2015, 11:10 AM ET
By JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

Like 9

7

57

+1 0

0 Comments



After a 2014 chemical spill polluted drinking water for more than 300,000 people in **West Virginia**, lawmakers there quickly mandated tighter surveillance of the state's chemical storage tanks. It revealed dozens of tanks that shouldn't have been in service still posed a potential threat to drinking water for more than 134,000 people downstream. Many were corroded and a few were filled with hazardous chemicals.

But under pressure from industry, lawmakers have already exempted thousands of tanks from the law.

A state survey found about 50 storage tanks near waterways shouldn't have been in service.

State environmental regulators identified the tanks under a law passed following the January 2014 chemical spill at Freedom Industries. The leak from a corroded tank protected by a porous containment wall left 300,000 Charleston-area residents without clean tap water for four to 10 days.

The tank tally was one of the law's first requirements, and it quickly yielded results. Most of the shoddy tanks have been drained, and owners are monitoring others until they can be taken out of service for repairs, regulators said.

Environmental advocates, watchdog groups and some citizens say it proves the law is already working, despite officials' urgency to trim it.

"Unfortunately, now that the law was significantly scaled back during the last legislative session, many fewer tanks will need to be inspected," said Evan Hansen, president of the Morgantown-based Downstream Strategies water consulting firm. "And the inspections that are still required will likely be done less often."

The initial inventory mapped 49,000 tanks. Tank owners submitted inspection reports due in January.

Industry groups — notably oil and natural gas — said the law was too burdensome on business. The Legislature and Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin responded this year by removing about 36,000 tanks from the program, saying the law should focus on the most dangerous tanks. More could be exempted if officials decide tanks are sufficiently regulated in other programs.






Those changes take effect in mid-June.

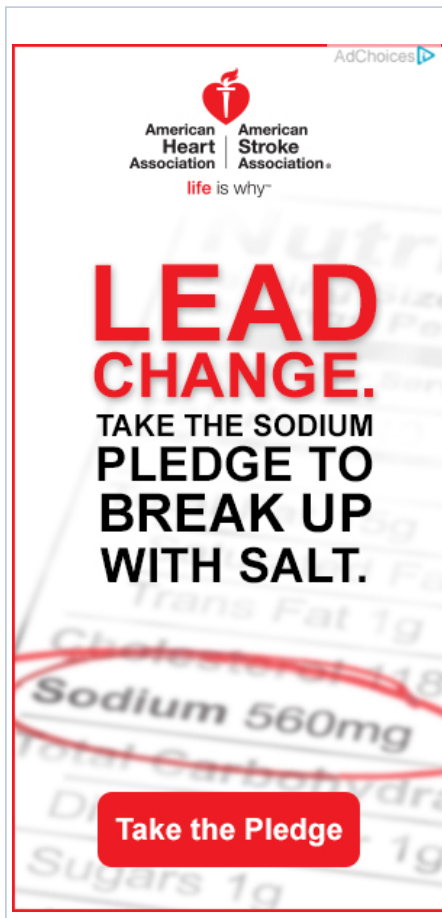
The survey showed some tanks contained thousands of gallons of brine, oil and gas used in natural gas drilling, while one 275,000-gallon tank held hazardous sodium hydroxide, also called caustic soda.

"I do not believe we would've gotten this information had the law not passed," said Ruth Porter, Department of Environmental Protection aboveground storage tank program director. The information, she said, "will help us to be able to protect public health and the environment."

The first round of brief inspection summaries sparked concern: More than 1,500 tanks weren't safe enough to hold chemicals.

HOT RIGHT NOW

-  Official: One of Garland, Texas Shooting Suspects ID'd
-  2 Gunmen Killed Outside 'Draw the Prophet' Cartoon Show
-  Inside Texas Community Center Moments After Shooting
-  Lindsey Vonn and Tiger Woods Announce Split
-  Prince Harry on Royal Baby: 'I Can't Wait to Meet Her'



AdChoices

American Heart Association | American Stroke Association
life is why™

LEAD CHANGE.
TAKE THE SODIUM PLEDGE TO BREAK UP WITH SALT.

Sodium 560mg

Take the Pledge

Officials contacted owners of about 100 tanks that held hazardous chemicals or sat near public water intakes. About fifty of them said their tanks still held chemicals and were close enough to threaten surface water supplies.

Four tanks held materials threatening enough that federal law deemed them hazardous.

Last year's spill, though, didn't involve a chemical with the "hazardous" label.

Because the coal-cleaning mixture crude MCHM that leaked into the Elk River last year wasn't considered hazardous, little information was available about how toxic it could be.

Spills of commonplace substances have also convinced officials to turn off the spigot.

VIEW SINGLE PAGE

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...



Tennessee County Serves Years-Old



A Look at What's Making Montel



Couple's Home Destroyed When



The No-Pain Heels Guide: 3 Stunning

Recommended by

PHOTO GALLERIES



View: Kentucky Derby's Craziest Hats and Best Dressed Celebs

Lifestyle



PROMOTED STORIES



From Office to Xbox: Microsoft's CEO talks transformation at Ignite live (Microsoft)



Lessons Learned from Police Body-Worn Cameras (Microsoft)



John Stamos Calls Out Olsen Twins on 'Fuller House' Reboot



14-Car Crash at Talladega Halts NASCAR Race

This Is the Future of Cities (Microsoft)

Levi's Says Don't Toss Those Old Jeans. Here's What to Do Instead. (Levi Strauss & Co.)

Mouth Watering Margarita Dip You'll Love this Cinco de Mayo (Recipe) (Rosarita)

The Stunning Way Our World Is Changing - "The End of Power" (Amazon.com)

Fastest Plane Can Fly Around The World In 2 Hours. This May Surprise You (PHOTOS) (HistoryInOrbit.com)

MORE FROM ABC NEWS

Britain's New Princess Can't Expect Fairy-Tale Life

Freddie Gray: Here Are the Charges Baltimore Cops Face

Dog Infects Humans With Plague for First Time in US

NYPD Officer Shot in the Head Remains Critical but Stable

Latest on Boston Trial: Cousin Describes Bomber as Kind

Recommended by

RELATED TOPICS: Earl Ray Tomblin, Consol Energy, Natural Gas

OFFERS YOU MIGHT LIKE

ADS BY ADBLADE

IMF Ruling To Crush USD?

Currency Expert: Watch What Happens To U.S. Dollar After Big IMF Announcement (Expected Oct. 20th)

More >>

New Rule In West Virginia

Why didn't they tell drivers about this new rule? If you drive less than 35 mi/day read this...

More >>

How To Remove Dark Spots

Beverly Hills Plastic Surgeon's Way To Remove Dark Spots Without Surgery.

More >>

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

SEE IT, SHARE IT



Carly Fiorina Enters Race Jabbing at Hillary Clinton



Inside the Group Hosting the 'Draw the Prophet' Event



Shooting Outside Texas Community Center



May the 4th Be With You: How 'Star Wars' Fanatics Are Celebrating

'Star Trek' Actress Grace Lee Whitney Dies