GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Just One Week After Trump Rolled Back Safety Measures, Chemical Plant Explosion Rocks Texas Town

"This facility has a track record of violating the Clean Air Act."

By Andrea Germanos
Global Research, November 28, 2019
Common Dreams 27 November 2019

Region: USA
Theme: Law and Justice, Oil and Energy

Concerns about air quality lingered Wednesday following a major early morning explosion at a chemical plant in Port Neches, Texas that shot a fireball into the sky.

The disaster at the TPC Group-owned facility roughly 94 miles west of Houston took place a week after the Trump administration rolled back safety rules meant to protect workers and people who live near chemical plants. In light of the timing, Catherine Fraser, Environment Texas's clean air associate, called Wednesday's explosion "a timely warning that state and federal officials need to do more to keep communities safe."

> "It shook our house twice," Shawn Dunlap, who lives in neighboring Nederland, told NBC News. "It was just like a bomb going off." Twitter user @souljaslim52 put itanother way: "shit blew tf up."

According to a statement from TPC Group, the incident occurred at 1:00am local time. The company said it "cannot speak to the cause of the incident or the extent of damage." The Port Neches Police Department, in a statement posted to Facebook, said, "There's extensive damage throughout the city."

Area residents reported damaged homes, with some suffering shattered glass and blown-off doors. Three workers at the plant also suffered minor injuries, the company said.

"Throughout the morning more booms could be heard in the area as firefighters attempted to control the blaze," reported Beaumont's *KBMT.*

Local *ABC* affiliate *KTRK* reported that the chemical burning is butadiene, which the EPA classifies as carcinogenic.

Area residents captured images and sounds of the explosion:

> WOW: Incredible video shared with us of the Port Neches plant explosion earlier this morning, not far from Beaumont. Eddie Ramirez writes: "My video cameras caught the moment impact. I hope and pray that everyone is ok." Latest updates: https://t.co/XTy9gwimgB | #HTownRush pic.twitter.com/pF63DrTFZL

— KHOU 11 News Houston (@KHOU) November 27, 2019

> TAKE A LOOK | Dramatic front camera video of the TPC Group Plant explosion in Port Neches
>
> READ MORE: https://t.co/FGYHV2w1p7 pic.twitter.com/pwq08qwCCY
>
> — 12NewsNow (@12NewsNow) November 27, 2019

Environment Texas's Fraser, in her statement, pointed to the plant's history as cause for particular concern.

> "This facility has a track record of violating the Clean Air Act," she said, "with five other illegal emissions events just in 2019, emitting carcinogenic 1,3 butadiene and other chemicals, and a history of community complaints."
>
> "According to the EPA, the TPC Plant has been in non-compliance 12 separate quarters over the last 3 years, and has received 7 formal enforcement actions over the last 5 years. According to the TCEQ, the chemical of most concern is butadiene," Fraser continued. "The TPC plant emitted 61,379 pounds of butadiene in 2018. Butadiene is a known human carcinogen."

Environmental justice expert Mustafa Santiago Ali weighed in on the explosion with a brief statement on Twitter. He noted that the Trump administration's move last week to finalize the weakening of the Chemical Disaster Rule and chided the president for "putting more people's lives in danger."

> When will they learn? Every time the #Trump Administration & #EPA rolls back a #environmental rule meant to protect your health or your life, something bad happens! 3 injured as Texas plant explosion releases chemical plume https://t.co/EUMPuacWEC pic.twitter.com/oNKBwq1QOV
>
> — Mustafa Santiago Ali (@EJinAction) November 27, 2019

Common Dreams: Our work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License. Feel free to republish and share widely.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Featured image: An explosion occurred at roughly 1:00 am Wednesday at a chemical plant in Port Neches, Texas. (Screengrab from video courtesy Derek Ross Hall via Twitter)

The original source of this article is Common Dreams
Copyright © Andrea Germanos, Common Dreams, 2019

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Andrea Germanos

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca