

Porter Ranch Gas Leak Victims to Meet Erin Brockovich, Weitz and Luxenberg, Dec. 9 in Porter Ranch, CA

NEW YORK, N.Y., Dec. 4, 2015 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Environmental activist Erin Brockovich – whom actress Julia Roberts famously portrayed in an Oscar-winning role – will join environmental and consumer protection attorneys from Weitz & Luxenberg, P.C., at a Southern California townhall meeting Wednesday evening, Dec. 9, for victims of the Porter Ranch gas leak, Weitz & Luxenberg today announced.

The exact time and location of the meeting will be announced shortly, Weitz & Luxenberg said. However, it will be in or near Porter Ranch, a community in the northwestern part of Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, the law firm said.

(UPDATED: Event Location/Time)
WHEN: Dec. 9, 2015 (Wednesday)
Shepherd of the Hills Church
19700 Rinaldi St, Porter Ranch, CA 91326
6:30 – 8:30 PM (PST)

Victims will be invited to talk about health problems, financial hardships, children's school-related issues, and the emotional turmoil suffered since the Porter Ranch gas leak, said to have begun on Oct. 23, the firm said.

Residents will also hear from Brockovich and from Weitz & Luxenberg attorneys about using the legal system to force the public utility responsible for the leak to stop it and prevent it from ever happening again and to restore the injured families' lives to the fullest extent possible, the firm said.

Additionally, attendees will hear from scientists and others about what can be done now to protect health, homes, education, and family finances in the face of the ongoing gas leak, the firm said.

Porter Ranch Gas Leak Causing Health Problems:

The gas leak occurred in an 8,500-foot well owned by Southern California Gas Co. The Los Angeles Times reported that the well is used to store natural gas treated with mercaptans, an agent that gives the odorless gas a smell like rotten eggs.

Attempts have been made to stop the leak but to date have failed. The Los Angeles Times reported that it could be as many as four months yet before the well is plugged.

The Los Angeles Times reported that the emissions from the Porter Ranch gas leak have also exposed the residents to methane.

The quantity of methane exposure has been significant. Authorities quoted by

The Times estimate the Porter Ranch residents were exposed to the same amount of methane in just two months that is produced by 160,000 cars in an entire year. It is believed that residents are being exposed to other chemicals as well.

“The exposed residents have suffered headaches, dizziness, nosebleeds, stomach pain and respiratory problems,” said Robin L. Greenwald, who heads Weitz & Luxenberg’s Environmental, Toxic Tort & Consumer Protection litigation unit. “There is no excuse for keeping those residents in the dark about the health consequences, about the health of their children, about the value of their greatest economic asset – their homes. They need and deserve help and information, but are not receiving any.”

Brockovich, Weitz & Luxenberg Fighting for the Children:

Brockovich – best known for helping obtain a \$333 million settlement from Pacific Gas & Electric on behalf of 600 residents of the town of Hinkley, California, over groundwater contaminated by a carcinogenic compound – has teamed up with Weitz & Luxenberg many times before, the firm said.

With the Porter Ranch gas leak, it is the children who are at greatest risk, Brockovich said.

“I’ve heard from many Porter Ranch parents who tell me their children have nose bleeds – even 1-year-olds with nose bleeds, it’s tragic,” she said.

“Children are being kept out of school because of the health consequences they’re suffering,” she continued. “Many of the families are being relocated, but to inadequate accommodations, sometimes a single room in a hotel, a family of four or more. It’s the holiday time, when families should be in the comfort of their homes and celebrating with their friends and neighbors. This is a dreadful situation.”

Brockovich said she and Weitz & Luxenberg intend to make sure at the Dec. 9 townhall meeting that the families’ voices are heard.

Greenwald said she and Brockovich particularly want to hear from the parents about what’s happening to them and their children from day to day.

“We want to hear about the problems they’re having keeping their children in school, the problems that having their children home sick during the workweek is causing to the parents,” Greenwald said.

“We want to hear about the acute physical reactions the children and their parents are having – the emotional toll this is taking on the families,” she added.

Greenwald explained that lawsuits are the logical next step. “We plan to file on behalf of the individuals who are suffering from the gas leak,” she said.

A lawsuit against the gas company would seek monetary damages for the families as well as an injunction to remedy some of the immediate issues

residents are experiencing, Greenwald said.

The lawsuit would, among other remedies, also seek to provide ongoing health monitoring of all the residents of the area, Greenwald said.

About Weitz & Luxenberg:

Weitz & Luxenberg P.C. is among the nation's leading and most readily recognized personal injury and consumer protection law firms. Weitz & Luxenberg's numerous litigation areas include: mesothelioma, defective medicine and devices, environmental pollutants, products liability, consumer protection, accidents, personal injury, and medical malpractice. Victims of consumer fraud are invited to rely on Weitz & Luxenberg's more than 25 years of experience handling such cases. You can contact the firm's Client Relations department at 800-476-6070 or at clientrelations@weitzlux.com.

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