

Protect **PT**

Information on Leachate



What is leachate?

Leachate is made when rainwater moves through landfills, filtering through the waste and drawing out things like heavy metals and other toxins. If a landfill accepts solid oil and gas waste, the leachate may even pick up radioactive material. Also, although landfills do not generally generate PFAS, they do house large amounts of it, making leachate highly concentrated with PFAS.

Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill

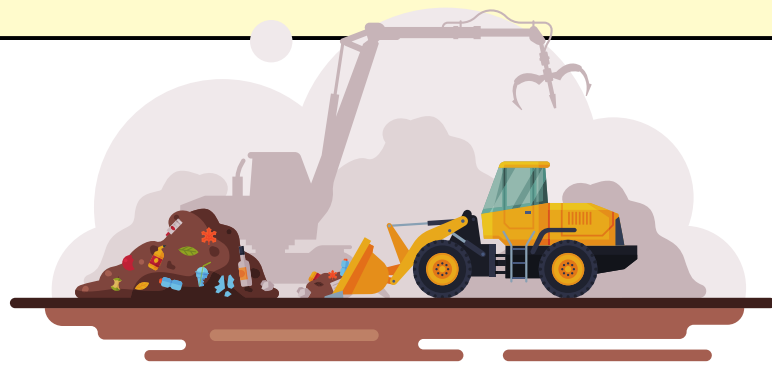
Background

WSL is a **residual/municipal waste** facility that has accepted fracking waste since 2010. It has a history of violations and community complaints around health impacts from leachate and landfill fumes.

Is Fracking Waste Hazardous?

Hazardous waste is waste with properties that make it dangerous or capable of having a harmful effect on human health or the environment. It is well established that fracking fluids and waste are **harmful** to human health and the environment, but the EPA classifies Municipal Solid Waste Landfills (MSWLFs) as designed to receive household waste, as well as other types of **nonhazardous wastes**.

A study conducted in Poland published in 2021 even found that landfill leachate contained cytotoxins — toxins that cause cell death. Our bodies are made up of trillions of cells that at some point die, but the study found that leachate increased cell death at an unnatural rate.



Polluting Our Water

WSL **leaked** an unknown amount of leachate into Speers Run, a tributary of Monongahela River, in 2022. WSL **did not** give the Department of Environmental Protection required notice of the spill.

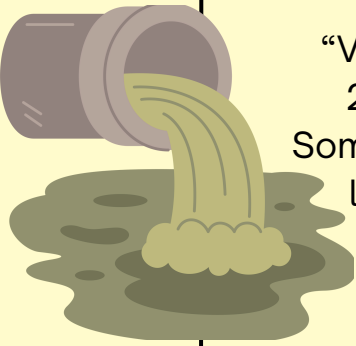
The Marcellus Shale found in PA contains uranium. Radioactive isotopes then decay into the **heavy metals found in WSL's leachate**. As it decays, most of the uranium turns to radium, and then radon — a **carcinogen**.

And in 2019, WSL's leachate **killed** the microorganisms at Belle Vernon Municipal Authority, which are responsible for treating wastewater before it's released into the river. The die-off caused radium levels about the EPA's limits to flow into the Monongahela.

But the DEP told the facility to keep accepting the landfill leachate while they sorted the issue out. The DEP moved slowly, causing the **municipal authority of Belle Vernon to sue** to stop accepting the leachate.

Protect PT

Information on Leachate



“Violations were recorded in almost a dozen inspections during 2019 and 2020; ‘several loads of drilling mud’ were left exposed for six months. Sometimes leachate was found pooling or leaking from different parts of the landfill, and once, a hose filling trucks with leachate to be transported elsewhere caused an “uncontrolled release” of the toxic liquid.”

PublicSource, *‘Landfill tea’ steeps fracking waste near suburban communities*

Violations

DEP fined the landfill \$62,475 for **violating** the state Solid Waste Management Act and Clean Streams Law — citing poor site maintenance and issues with the secondary containment of the leachate storage area in Nov. 2023. This comes after fines were issued in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

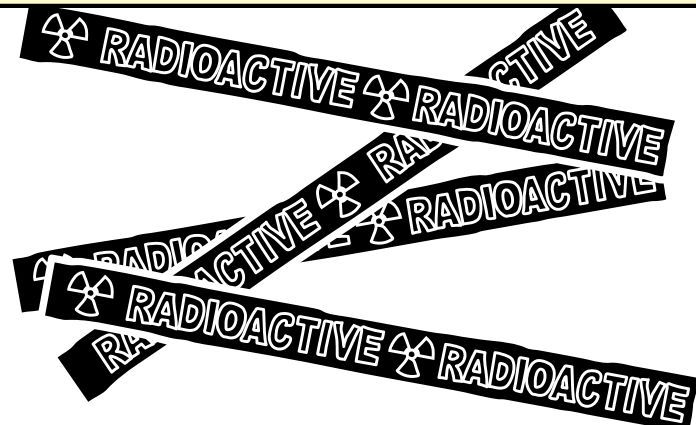
WSL only paid \$24,000 in 2020 and \$25,000 in 2021 for violations.

Leachate Evaporator System

DEP says evaporating liquid leachate at WSL would eliminate risks of spills, impacts, and traffic associated with trucking leachate offsite for disposal.

But this technology is new and **not much information** can be found on the effects of leachate evaporators on human health. The landfill and DEP has **not worked in the public’s interest**, so can they be trusted to operate this new technology that evaporates waste containing heavy metals and radioactive material?

Visit protectpt.org for more info



Sources

- <https://www.publicsource.org/fracking-waste-landfill-radioactive-westmoreland-rostraver-plum-reinjection-well/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8405471/>
- <https://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/westmoreland-sanitary-landfill-cited-for-leachate-leak-into-speers-run/>
- <https://www.wastetodaymagazine.com/news/westmoreland-sanitary-landfill-fined-more-than-62k-by-pennsylvania-dep/>
- <https://www.alleghenyfront.org/how-did-fracking-contaminants-end-up-in-the-mon-river-a-loophole-in-the-law-might-be-to-blame/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8405471/>
- <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/fracking-101>
- <https://www.epa.gov/landfills/basic-information-about-landfills>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8405471/>