

## Pickets demand groundwater cleanup

PERCHLORATE: A firm that did rocket testing 45 years ago is accused of downplaying health risks.

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Massiel Ladrón De Guevara The Press-Enterprise

About 20 Rialto residents, a city councilman and representatives of nonprofit organizations gathered with signs in front of the Goodrich Corp. facility in Riverside on Friday, demanding that the corporation clean up perchlorate contamination in groundwater.

The protestors claimed Goodrich and other corporations have funded extensive efforts to downplay the health risks associated with perchlorate and have refused to clean up groundwater they polluted with the chemical.

"Goodrich has denied they had a plant where they tested rockets in Rialto. Yet several years ago, under one of our schools, a rocket manufactured in Rialto around 1960 with Goodrich's name on it was found," said City Councilman Ed Scott.

Gail Warner, director of media relations for Goodrich, said in a statement that the company conducted research and development in Rialto, with some production of missiles, from about 1957 to 1963.

The company reached an interim agreement in 2003 to begin water treatment on public water wells in Rialto, Colton and Fontana, she wrote.

In 2005, Goodrich entered an interim settlement agreement with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to schedule further investigation of contamination and is continuing to work with the board, she wrote.

Rialto and its public utility sued Goodrich and 41 other agencies and companies in January 2004 over perchlorate contamination.

Perchlorate is a component of rocket fuel and fireworks that is believed to interfere with thyroid function and brain development. Fetuses and newborns are most at risk.

The chemical has contaminated six of Rialto's wells.

The Environmental California Research and Policy Center published a report that claims Goodrich and other corporations accused of contaminating the groundwater have tried to mislead the public and decision makers about the health risks associated with the chemical.

Narene Deischer said she was protesting because she drank the city's tap water during two pregnancies in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, before residents had information about perchlorate contamination.

"One child died nine days after being born and the other child has several illnesses on the list of problems perchlorate can cause," Deischer said.

She said her children who were born in Los Angeles don't have those problems.

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