



Statement from Travis L. at the U.S. EPA: Environmental Justice Consultation for Asbestos and PV29 Meeting

June 1, 2021

My name is Travis L. and I am here to share the story of my grandfather, [Alfred Watts](#). Alfred worked at Dow Chemical Company chlorine plant for 40 years as a laborer and lived in Plaquemine, Louisiana. In 1994, he found out that he had throat cancer, caused by asbestos. He was never warned by DOW about the dangers of working with asbestos, just like so many people in my community -- we've learned the painful way that there is no safe level of asbestos exposure.

I have seen what asbestos did to my grandfather. He developed cancer, got his vocal box taken out, the cancer spread some more, and then he lost his life all in less than 10 years. It's sad that workers get exposed to asbestos and loved ones like myself have to see them wither in front of our eyes. Alfred was only one of thousands of workers, who have been exposed to asbestos because of DOW and companies who have and continue to import and use asbestos

Today, I work as an environmental and community activist in Louisiana's Cancer Alley. This area is home to mostly Black Americans and Latinos, and the incredibly high amount of chemical plants have polluted the water and air and caused cancer and health problems for its residents, including my grandfather. The UN has called Cancer Alley a government failure. This is environmental racism.

When you begin to manage the deadly risk of asbestos, remember my story is not unique. I'm calling on the EPA to ban the asbestos imports and use in my state and throughout the nation. My grandfather's voice box was taken away, but I am now a voice for his legacy until the suffering and deaths end.