

LIGHTS OUT NORLITE  
Lightsoutnorlite.org

Background on Norlite's historic pollution at: [Lightsoutnorlite.org](http://Lightsoutnorlite.org)

## NEWS RELEASE

For Release: March 26, 2024

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Community Group, Lights Out Norlite Calls for Permanent Shutdown of Norlite and Support for Laid Off Workers

Calls For Testing of the Neighborhood, Soil and Groundwater; Add it to the List of Superfund Sites to Ensure Permanent Clean Up

Lights Out Norlite, the community group that is suing to shut down the Norlite hazardous waste incinerator and aggregate production facility in Cohoes, said it welcomed the announcement that the plant is at least temporarily shutting down.

"The best solution is for Norlite to permanently shut down, ending the decades of pollution from the plant. The pollution was so bad that over 70 families living in the adjacent public housing apartments were forced to move out last year, but many neighbors remain. There is no question that this facility needs to remain closed. And it would need to work with local residents and environmental agencies to remove the mountains of uncovered piles of materials which blow dangerous silica dust all over the area," said Joe Ritchie.

The group also called on Albany County and the state Department of Labor to assist Norlite employees in finding newer, safer jobs. Renewable energy is a booming industry and laid-off Norlite employees should be given assistance to move into those new positions, which pay a living wage. Norlite should at least follow the federal law (WARN Act) which requires large employers (100 workers) to give their employees 60 days notice of layoffs or pay.

The Attorney General and the State Department of Environmental Conservation last year, after years of requests from Lights Out Norlite and other residents, filed suit against Norlite for operating as a public nuisance. Lights Out Norlite moved to intervene in the lawsuit, citing DEC's failure over the decades to get Norlite to operate in compliance with environmental regulations. Lights Out Norlite is also suing under the recent Green amendment to the constitution, which gives residents the right to clean air and water.

Attorney General Letitia James and DEC recently brought additional legal actions and fines against Norlite, including moving for contempt of court charges, charging that Norlite had failed to comply with a legal (consent) agreement approved by the judge in the case. DEC also finally

has moved to amend Norlite's permit to comply with changes in the law that require it to treat the fly ash from its pollution control as a hazardous waste, rather than mixing it with its aggregate to sell as a building mix.

"Norlite has shown it is not able to operate in compliance with air pollution limits even when they are being sued in court by the State of New York and Lights Out Norlite under the jurisdiction of a judge. This multinational corporation is incapable of operating a safe plant. It is time to put the well-being of residents first, and focus on closing the plant down and transitioning its workers to good-paying jobs with benefits," said Mark Dunlea of Lights Out Norlite.

"Norlite, its parent company Tradebe, and the NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation must answer to all affected communities and individuals for Norlite's toxic legacy. For decades, Norlite has burned hazardous waste, sold and distributed millions of tons of hazardous waste dust, and allowed thousands of tons of fugitive hazardous waste dust to blow out into surrounding communities. The DEC enabled Norlite to operate many years longer than they should have, and this would still be true today if not for community organizing and action," added David Publow.

Lights Out Norlite called for Attorney General Letitia James to initiate an independent investigation of Norlite's impact on public health. Norlite must be required to safely dispose of all its piles of product and waste materials which are a public health hazard. All hazardous waste that they intended to burn must immediately be removed from the property. The State of New York or the US Environmental Protection Agency must do extensive testing of soil, groundwater, and surface water on Norlite's property and adjacent land and determine if it can be put in the state or federal superfund program. Norlite's grounds are a public health threat, and the company should not be allowed to walk away from decades of pollution created at the property in the city of Cohoes.