

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner
210 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202

April 18, 2008

The Honorable Sheila Dixon
City Hall, Room 250
100 N. Holliday St.
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Madame Mayor,

The Swann Park Task Force has completed its third and final report, providing recommendations for Maryland's current environmental policy based on the lessons learned from the arsenic contamination at Swann Park.

The first report of the Task Force, in July 2007, reviewed historic documents to determine why arsenic contamination at the park had remained hidden for 30 years. Our report found that key information about high levels of arsenic in the park known to Allied Chemical was not shared with a committee established in 1976 to assess the safety of the park.

Subsequently, the Task Force reviewed research conducted in the late 1970s by Johns Hopkins investigators on arsenic in Swann Park. We found that studies showing increased cancer mortality among men living near the park were never shared with the 1976 committee or with the community. In a letter to the Mayor, the Task Force urged greater cooperation between researchers and policymakers in Baltimore.

In this third and final report, we examined the question of how to improve the public's access to and understanding of information about environmental contamination and how to increase the resources available for environmental cleanup in Maryland.

It has been a privilege to serve on the Task Force, and we hope that the information we have provided is helpful to the government and residents of Baltimore.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Josh M. Sharfstein".

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

On behalf of the Swann Park Task Force: Dr. Lynn R. Goldman, George Nilson, Heather Moore, Stuart Simms, and Dr. Joshua Sharfstein