

Breaking News

Chemical, Plastics Makers Awarded Victory in Highly Publicized “Blue Vinyl” Lawsuit

ARLINGTON, VA — The Superior Court of Delaware has found no basis for conspiracy charges related to vinyl plastic manufacturing brought against the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and more than 30 other industry defendants.

The Court on January 28 granted the defendants’ motion for summary judgment, which was unopposed by the plaintiff, thereby vindicating ACC in the high profile case, according to court papers made public following the decision. The American Chemistry Council represents America’s leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry.

The plaintiff, Lori Anne Sanzone, brought the suit in 2000 and achieved notoriety when she appeared in the documentary film, “Blue Vinyl,” alleging health effects caused by manufacturing products from polyvinyl chloride (commonly referred to as PVC). The film by Judith Helfand and Daniel Gold, which was screened at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and aired numerous times on HBO and in communities across the country, features emotional scenes of Sanzone connecting a serious illness to a job she held briefly more than two decades earlier.



Sanzone asserted that she contracted angiosarcoma, a rare form of liver cancer, after working seven days in 1978 at a Florida pipe-making plant that used PVC. She sued ACC and 30 other entities that were either suppliers or simply involved in the industry during the past half-century. Organizations that had never supplied polyvinyl chloride materials were named because they “allegedly participated in a supposedly enormous and far-reaching conspiracy to injure plaintiff,” according to one court document.

Sanzone’s claims proved false. Sanzone did not suffer from angiosarcoma, but from epithelioid hemangioendothelioma (EHE), a disease whose only known medical link is to birth control pills. Sanzone continued to press the lawsuit despite the fact that her own physicians would not testify that she had contracted angiosarcoma.

As the suit progressed, the plaintiff’s lawyers failed to produce witnesses on her behalf. In the end, there was no evidence of any misconduct by the industry. “We wish Ms. Sanzone the best and hope for her full recovery,” said Don Evans, Senior Counsel for the American Chemistry Council. “At the same time, we are pleased the court

recognized that vinyl chloride played no role in the illness she contracted or the claims that she brought.” “We are very gratified by the outcome of this case, especially considering the notoriety this suit received with the

release of the film ‘Blue Vinyl’,” Evans continued. “This is a major blow to those who would try to file unjustified lawsuits.”

The lead attorney on the case was Timothy Coughlin with the law firm Thompson Hine LLP, which has been successful in other vinyl chloride cases in California, Maryland and Illinois. Thompson Hine LLP currently is working on numerous related suits.

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people’s lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$460 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation’s economy. It is the nation’s largest exporter, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies invest more in research and development than any other business sector. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation’s critical infrastructure.

(Source: American Chemistry Council)