

Officials: Department of Labor needs to clean up hazardous materials at Lawrence Aviation in Port Jefferson Station

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The Lawrence Aviation property in Port Jefferson Station, now a superfund site, was once used to manufacture titanium sheets used in the aeronautics industry. (Credit: News 12)

PORT JEFFERSON STATION - Officials are demanding that the state Department of Labor clean up a toxic site in Suffolk County. The Lawrence Aviation property in Port Jefferson Station, now a superfund site, was once used to manufacture titanium sheets used in the aeronautics industry. Brookhaven Town Supervisor Ed Romaine says the location is covered in asbestos and other hazardous materials.

"We are demanding the owner clean up the oil spills from leaky machines, the transformers that remain on the property. These continue to be a threat to our groundwater," said Romaine. Records show a man named Gerald Cohen became the sole owner of the property in the early 1980s. No one answered the door at his St. James home Tuesday.

Romaine says Cohen sent somebody onto the site in an effort to strip the machinery a few months ago. He says the workers knocked out all the piping, which had asbestos in it. He says they left the asbestos in a pile. Romaine says it's now up to the state Department of Labor to get rid of it.

Cohen pleaded guilty in 2008 to leaving over 12 tons of corrosive hazardous waste material on the property. While Romaine says the Environmental Protection Agency has spent \$25 million on remediation, he fears the damage is already done.

The Department of Labor has not returned calls for comment from News 12. According to the EPA, a groundwater extraction and treatment system has been completed and is fully operational on the site.