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Union Pacific Railroad officials respond to concerns of pollution

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EUGENE - Officials with Union Pacific Railroad break their silence tonight and respond to accusations of pollution in several North Eugene homes and neighborhoods.

Back in May, state public health officials released a report stating that the contamination in the groundwater and crawl spaces from the rail yard does pose some health risks to residents in the River Road and Trainsong neighborhoods.

Tonight, we get to hear the other side, as Union Pacific Officials speak out.

The company hired a toxicologist and groundwater hydrologist to explain their findings in a public meeting.

They say, they found very low levels of two potentially dangerous solvents called trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene in the neighborhoods.

The levels are well below the amount it would take to cause any known health effects, but they say, it is still a cause for concern. "There are no known health effects at the levels that we're detecting in crawl spaces, but there are levels that are set to protect public health from long-term exposure that are actually targets that they're going to try to meet for cleanup," toxicologist Alan Nye said.

That cleanup plan includes a pilot study where barriers will be put in several homes to see how effective they are at blocking vapors from the contaminated groundwater from rising into crawl spaces.

That study is set to start in early August.

Union Pacific officials also say, they'll continue to gather more data and samples.

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