

Source Project: People, Politics, and the Environment



PRESENTER:

Sadie Berg

BACKGROUND: Who cares?

- Research to reveal an overall pattern in what makes environmental class action lawsuits successful
- Preventative measures can be provided and safety can be increased
- Most people are not knowledgeable on this subject unless they have personally been impacted

METHODS

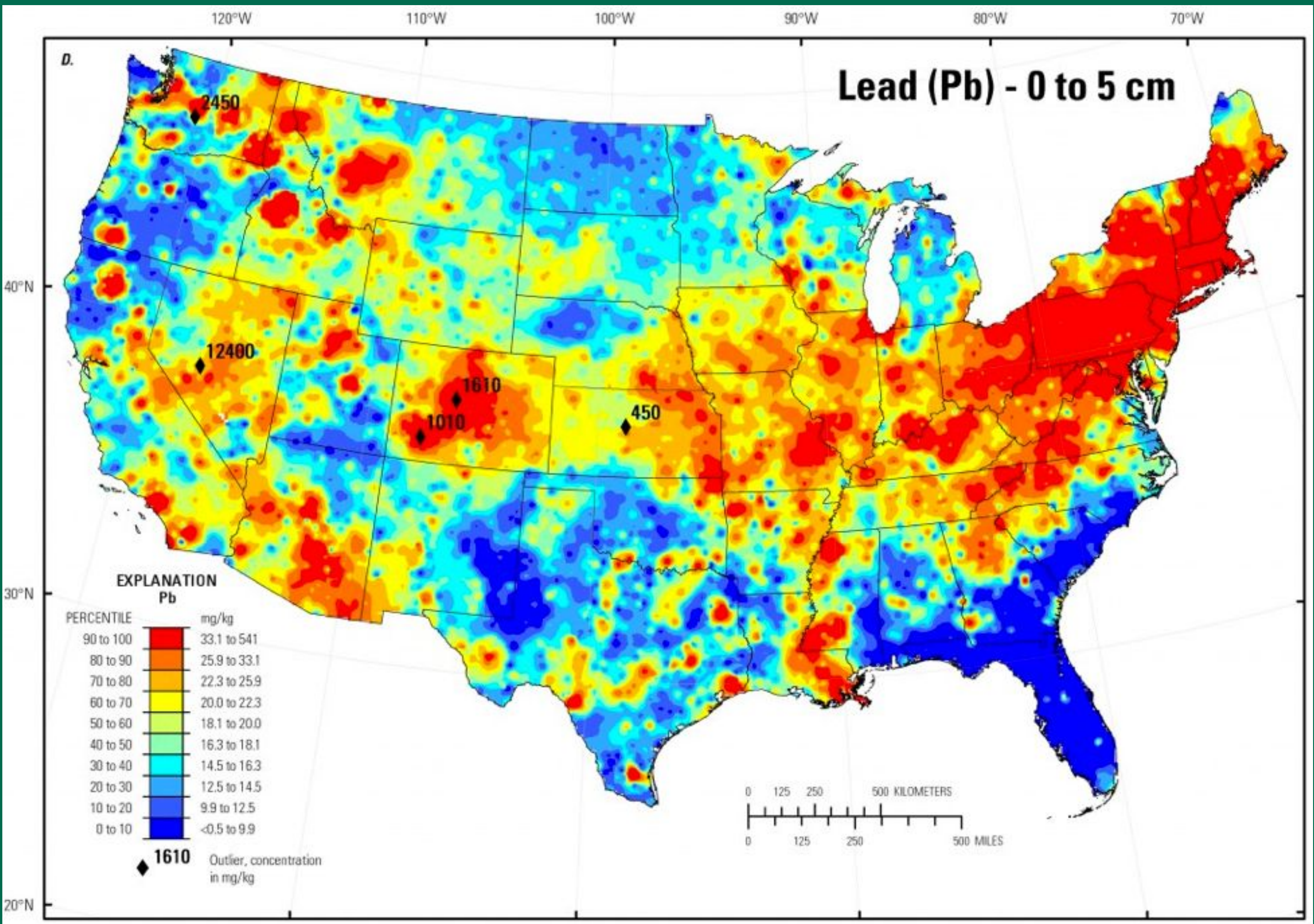
- Meta-analysis methodology
 - Collected data from many different court cases

RESULTS

- Most cases result in financial compensation for the plaintiffs
 - Some cases (ex. *Schaffner v. Monsanto*) are unsuccessful
- The aftermath of the problem is not always completely resolved
 - More change needs to be made

Class Actions and Environmental Justice: Are Lawsuits Driving Real Change?

Although many environmental class action lawsuits result in monetary compensation, more change is necessary.



Overall lead contamination throughout the United States: shows Flint, Michigan is not an isolated case and that more change needs to be made (AANMC)

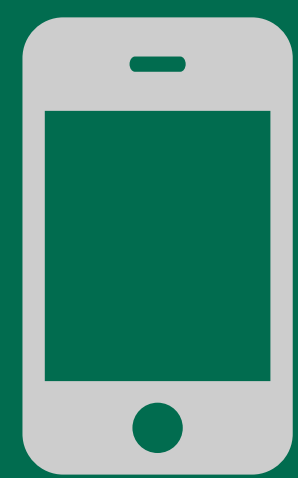
Specific Cases Focused On:

Court Case / Company	Plaintiff(s)	Year(s)	Ongoing	Type of problem
Anderson v. Cryovac, Inc. (Woburn, MA)	Anne Anderson (8 families)	1982-1986	No	water contamination
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill	Combination of locals and commercial fishermen	1989-2015	No	water pollution - oil spill
Erin Brockovich (Hinkley)	over 600 residents of Hinkley, CA	1993-1996	No	water contamination
DuPont	Wilbur Tennant	1999-2024	No	water contamination
Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill	Affected Gulf States (MS, LA, AL, TX, FL) and other individuals	2013-2016	No	water pollution - oil spill
Flint, Michigan	Numerous residents of Flint, Michigan	2014-2025	No	water contamination
California Porter Ranch Gas Leak	35,000 individuals filed claims	2015-2021	No	air pollution
Roundup (Bayer) - Schaffner v. Monsanto	David Schaffner Jr. and Teresa Sue Schaffner	2019-2024	No	product/consumer
Johnson & Johnson - Plotkin et al. v. Johnson&Johnson et al.	Evan Plotkin	2021-2024	No	product/consumer
Hershey (bubble gum) - Mohamed v. The Hershey Company	Abraham Mohamed	2024-present	Yes	product/consumer



Full Paper

Take a picture to download the full paper and references



References

CASE SUMMARIES:

- **Woburn, MA** - *Anderson v. Cryovac, Inc*
 - Problem: contamination of two municipal supply wells by three local industries
 - Result: \$8 million settlement for plaintiffs
- **Exxon Valdez Oil Spill**
 - Problem: *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker spilled 11 million gallons of oil; detrimental to plants, animals, and local communities
 - Result: \$287 million in compensatory damages, \$2.5 billion in punitive damages
- **Hinkley, California** - *Anderson, et al. v. Pacific Gas and Electric Company*
 - Problem: PG&E released hexavalent chromium into nearby land and water; people drank lead-contaminated water
 - Result: \$333 million for over 600 plaintiffs
- **DuPont**
 - Problem: Dupont consciously released PFOA into the Ohio River and into the air
 - Result: \$1.185 billion in all settlements combined with Dupont over chemical contamination
- **Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill**
 - Problem: 3.19 million barrels of oil spread into the Gulf of Mexico; damage to ecosystems; 126 deaths
 - Result: settlement of \$20.8 billion
- **Flint, Michigan**
 - Problem: contaminated drinking water; water supply switched from Detroit to the Flint River, a waste disposal site; water transferred through corroded lead pipes
 - Result: \$640 million for residents, changing water source back to Detroit, upgrades to pipes and other systems
- **California Porter Ranch Gas Leak**
 - Problem: Aliso Canyon gas leak released around 100,000 tons of methane into the atmosphere
 - Result: Settlement of \$1.8 billion
- **Roundup (Bayer)** - *Schaffner v. Monsanto*
 - Problem: Roundup weed-killer contains PCBs
 - Result: Schaffner unsuccessful in his case; however Bayer paid over \$10 billion to settle thousands of claims
- **Johnson & Johnson** - *Plotkin et al. v. Johnson & Johnson et al.*
 - Problem: J&J knew that their baby powder contained asbestos, but did not publicly disclose this information
 - Result: Plotkin compensated with \$15 million; millions of dollars to plaintiffs; discontinued sales of talc products
- **Hershey (bubble gum)** - *Mohamed v. The Hershey Company*
 - Problem: Did not disclose that its products can expose people to PFAS
 - Result: N/A (ongoing)