At a growing number of sites across the nation, vapors from volatile subsurface contamination are migrating into overlying homes, schools, and businesses. Known as “vapor intrusion,” this process is particularly frightening because contamination is entering, or threatening to enter, homes and schools. We have the science to understand vapor intrusion and the tools to mitigate it, but we do not always have the will.

Vapor intrusion is more complex than other contamination pathways, so it takes impacted communities some time to understand what is going on. A growing number of residents are expressing the need for blanket mitigation, long-term monitoring, and full source remediation. Properly informed, these residents can be a positive force to propel forward the technologies and methods necessary to evaluate and counter vapor intrusion. Therefore, it is essential that responsible parties, regulators, and their consultants work with impacted communities to secure repeated access to buildings for sampling and mitigation.