The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has abandoned a previously agreed upon $4 million settlement with Honeywell meant to address environmental damages on a Superfund site in Glynn County.

One Hundred Miles, a local environmental nonprofit, filed a lawsuit March 27 claiming the settlement was far from enough money to compensate for the damages caused to recreational fishing due to the release of toxic chemicals from the site.

“The DNR is now free to work toward a settlement that more adequately represents the natural resources and citizens affected by the massive amounts of PCBs and mercury released by Honeywell,” said Megan Desrosiers, president and CEO of One Hundred Miles. “This dismissal is an indicator that the DNR is serious about engaging residents and elected officials from Brunswick and Glynn County to take significant strides and overcome the toxic legacy left by Honeywell and others. We are happy that they are willing to go back to the drawing board after hearing the community’s concerns.”
At the end of April, DNR filed an opposition to One Hundred Miles’ motion to intervene in the settlement, along with an affidavit from a DNR staff member managing the project. One Hundred Miles then filed a motion to exclude the DNR staff member affidavit.

One Hundred Miles has followed this situation for many years, since the nonprofit was founded in 2013, said Alice Keyes, vice president of coastal conservation.

“One Hundred Miles is an advocacy organization,” Keyes said. “... The people that joined us and filed the motion to intervene are the people affected by Honeywell’s massive amounts of pollution that they dumped into our resources.”

When the settlement was announced in December 2019, One Hundred Miles submitted an open records request to ask for information about how the settlement number was arrived upon.

“When we read about the settlement, and we saw that DNR was the trustee for the citizens of the state of Georgia, we started asking questions — is this really fair, can you prove to us that this was fair, what went into the settlement?” Keyes said. “And we were denied all the information.”

At a public meeting in January, many attendees asked how the monetary figure of $4 million was decided on. One Hundred Miles claimed $4 million was 1/100th of a percent of the total damage done to the marsh and estuarine systems by the industrial releases.

A vice president of Honeywell told The News in a statement last month that the settlement is fair. Honeywell’s predecessor Allied Chemical built the LCP plant in 1955, and LCP was not part of Honeywell. Its executives were criminally convicted in 1999 for their actions related to contaminating the marsh.
The company has done extensive work since to address contaminated soils and materials, wrote Evan van Hook, corporate vice president of health, safety, environment and product stewardship and sustainability, in a letter to The Brunswick News.

“Honeywell has a strong history of successfully resolving complex environmental challenges. We take a proactive approach to remediating legacy contamination, which largely relates to our historical operations and those of predecessor companies,” van Hook said. “One of our most important projects is the cleanup and restoration of the former LCP Chemicals’ site on Ross Road, a federal Superfund site. Over the past 20-plus years, a team of national and local experts has been studying and cleaning up the site, working under the oversight of both federal and state regulators.”

Lauren McDonald