Vasquez Boulevard I-70 Superfund Site Operable Unit 2

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 8 FEBRUARY 2010

Introduction

On January 19, 1999, the Vasquez Boulevard & I-70 Site was proposed for the EPA Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), a roster of the most serious hazardous-waste sites in the country. Including the Site on the NPL assures EPA immediate access to cleanup funding through the Superfund program if industries fail to clean up the site adequately. Listing also guarantees the public an opportunity to participate in cleanup decisions.

Site Description and Background

The VB/I-70 Site is an area of approximately four square miles located in north-central Denver. Historically, this area was a major smelting center for the Rocky Mountain West. Three smelting plants: Omaha-Grant, Argo, and Globe operated in the area for varying lengths of time, beginning as early as 1870, refining gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc.

Operable Unit 2 (OU2) of the VB/I-70 Site is where the Omaha-Grant Smelter was located. EPA is concerned that wastes generated from the historic smelter operation may still exist. In January 2010, EPA and the City and County of Denver (Denver) completed a Remedial Investigation (RI) of OU2. The RI describes the type of contaminants found at the Site and identifies where they are located.

EPA, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and Denver continue to work together to investigate potential heavy metal contamination in the soils, groundwater, surface water, and sediments at and adjacent to the Site. The Site is located approximately where the Denver Coliseum, Pepsi Bottling, and the Forney Transportation Museum stand today.

Work Planned for 2010

A feasibility study that identifies and evaluates options for reducing site contamination will be released in the spring 2010. A proposed plan detailing EPA proposed cleanup plan will be available for public comment in the coming months. EPA plans to issue its Record of Decision (ROD) for the cleanup in late 2010.

Site Risks

A Baseline Human Health and Screening Level of Ecological Risk Assessment for OU2 of the VB/I-70 Site was previously prepared by EPA (August, 2009). Based on the results of the draft risk assessment and a review of existing data, surface and subsurface soil were identified as the potential media of concern. Due to the limited occurrences of trace metals in groundwater and the lack of use of groundwater for domestic supply, groundwater was not found to be a media of concern. Arsenic and lead were identified as the potential chemicals of concern.

The occurrences of arsenic and lead at concentrations greater than background levels are localized and discontinuous. Sample results did not show broad areas of contamination but only isolated areas of arsenic and lead above background levels. Due to the presence of buildings and pavement that reduce erosion, windblown dust, or storm water runoff containing contaminants; significant transport and migration of the arsenic and lead occurrences from the soil is not expected to occur.

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Or Visit the Site Website
www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/co/vbi70/

Site Information Repository is Located at:
Valdez-Perry Library
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