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EPA Adds Two, Proposes Six Hazardous Waste Sites to Superfund's National Priorities List

Cleaning up hazardous waste sites protects human health, raises property value, and facilitates the economic restoration of communities

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is adding two hazardous waste sites that pose risks to human health and the environment to the National Priorities List (NPL) of Superfund sites. In addition, the agency is proposing to add six additional sites to the list. The Superfund program, a federal program established by Congress in 1980, investigates and cleans up the most complex, uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites in the country and converts them into productive community resources by eliminating or reducing public health risks and environmental contamination associated with hazardous waste sites.

"EPA and our state partners continue to identify contaminated sites that pose risks to people and the environment," said Mathy Stanislaus, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. "By updating the NPL we continue to fulfill EPA's mission to clean up contaminated land and groundwater, returning them to communities for productive use. These Superfund cleanups help advance the economic well-being of communities by turning contaminated properties into productive community resources that can enhance property values, create jobs and broaden tax bases." Today, more than 800 Superfund sites across the Nation support some type of continued use, active reuse or planned reuse activities.

Recent academic research, from the study Superfund Cleanups and Infant Health, demonstrated that investment in Superfund cleanups reduces the incidence of congenital abnormalities for those living within 5,000 meters (or 5,468 yards) of a site. Another study conducted by researchers at Duke and Pittsburgh Universities, concluded that making a site final on the NPL may increase housing prices by signaling that a site will be cleaned up. Furthermore, the study found that once a site has all cleanup remedies in place, nearby properties have a significant increase in property values as compared to pre-NPL proposal values.

The following two sites have been added to the NPL:

- Indiana - Kokomo Contaminated Ground Water Plume (ground water plume) in Kokomo, Ind., and
- Michigan - DSC McLouth Steel Gibraltar Plant (steel finishing operation) in Gibraltar, Mich.

The following six sites have been proposed for addition to the NPL:

- Illinois - Estech General Chemical Company (pesticide manufacturer) in Calumet City, Ill.;
- Louisiana - Colonial Creosote (wood treatment plant) in Bogalusa, La.;
- Massachusetts - BJAT LLC (various industrial operations) in Franklin, Mass.;
- Montana - Anaconda Aluminum Company Columbia Falls Reduction Plant (aluminum smelter) in Columbia Falls, Mont.;
- Texas - Main Street Ground Water Plume (ground water plume) in Burnet, Tex.; and
- Washington - Grain Handling Facility at Freeman (grain handling facility) in Freeman, Wash.

The sites announced today have characteristics and conditions that vary in terms of size, complexity and

contamination. As with all NPL sites, EPA first works to identify the parties responsible for the contamination at a site, and requires them to conduct or pay for the cleanup. For the newly added sites without viable potentially responsible parties, EPA will investigate the full extent of the contamination before starting substantial cleanup at the site.

Past and current uses of the sites announced today include pesticide manufacturing, aluminum smelting, grain handling, wood treatment and steel finishing operations. Improper hazardous waste management associated with these activities, which occurred over many decades, led to the release of numerous site contaminants into the environment, including lead, mercury zinc and other metals; polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and chlorinated solvents such as vinyl chloride. Contamination affects surface water, ground water, soil and wetlands.

For example, EPA added the Kokomo Contaminated Ground Water Plume to the NPL. The site is a contaminated ground water plume with no identified source. The plume is approximately 294 acres and encompasses several municipal wells in the city. Approximately 55,000 Kokomo residents rely on drinking water from the affected well field.

EPA also added the DSC McLouth Steel Gibralter Plant Area site, a former steel processing facility where mismanaged leachate control systems have resulted in contamination to adjacent creeks and drains leading to the Detroit River.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the enactment of the Comprehensive Environmental, Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the law establishing the Superfund program. Superfund's passage was a giant step forward in cleaning up legacy industrial waste sites to help ensure human health and environmental protection. The Superfund law gives EPA the authority to clean up releases of hazardous substances and directs EPA to update the NPL at least annually. The NPL contains the nation's most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites. The list serves as the basis for prioritizing both enforcement actions and long-term EPA Superfund cleanup funding; only sites on the NPL are eligible for such funding.

Federal Register notices and supporting documents for the final and proposed sites:
http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/current.htm

Information about how a site is listed on the NPL:
http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/npl_hrs.htm

Superfund sites in local communities:
http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/index.htm

More information about the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the law establishing the Superfund program, can be found at:
http://epa.gov/superfund/policy/cercla.htm