REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: Lowerline Radiation Site, New Orleans, LA

DATE: June 5, 2019 CONTACT: Greg Fife, OSC

PURPOSE/ACTION NEEDED: Information

DEADLINE DATE: N/A

BACKGROUND:

The site is the location of a hot spot of Radium 226 (Ra-226) identified by the Department of Energy during a sweep of the area surrounding the Super Dome. It is located on the 3400 block of Lowerline Street in the Gert Town area of New Orleans.

CURRENT STATUS:

On May 28, 2019, at the request of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and City of New Orleans, EPA initiated an emergency removal action to address the threat posed by the Ra-226 contamination.

ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

The primary concern is the health and safety of the public. EPA's assessment showed elevated levels of gamma radiation over about half of the 3400 block of Lowerline Street.

TECHNICAL CONCERNS:

- The City of New Orleans attempted to remove the hotspot but after removing the one spot that had been identified, there were several more areas of elevated radioactivity.
- EPA Las Vegas staff will conduct a final survey to confirm all radiation contamination of concern has been successfully removed from the site.

REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Federal, state and local partners are working closely together to remove the contamination and dispose of it off site at a facility that is approved to accept the contaminated soil.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

- The site is located in a residential area on Lowerline Street in the Gert Town area of New Orleans.
- EPA staff visited with residents at their homes, met with the congregation at the adjacent church and sent informational flyers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Complete emergency response action.