Message

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Sent: 4/9/2018 10:49:04 PM
To: thomas macchiarella (thomas.macchiarella@navy.mil) [thomas.macchiarella@navy.mil]
Subject: FW: (Hunters Point) PEER Press Release: Radiation Problems Multiply for San Francisco's Hunters Point

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For Immediate Release: Monday, April 9, 2018
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RADIATION PROBLEMS MULTIPLY FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S HUNTERS POINT
Nearly All U.S. Navy Radiation Samples Were Falsified, Fraudulent or Unreliable

Washington, DC — Troubles afflicting the nearly 30-year radiation cleanup of San Francisco's Hunters Point shipyard are far worse than previously reported. Between 90 and 97% of the U.S. Navy soil samples re-examined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are "neither reliable nor defensible," according to an EPA review released today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER).

The Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in the city's southeast corner was the site of nuclear weapons research causing widespread radiological contamination. Navy ships contaminated by hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific were taken to Hunters Point for decontamination, which left the shipyard heavily polluted with radioactivity. It has been an EPA Superfund site since 1989. In today's real estate-mad San Francisco, it is slated for the largest redevelopment since the 1906 earthquake.

Beginning in 2010, employees of the Navy's site consultant, Tetra Tech, reported extensive data manipulation, falsification, and other efforts to minimize evidence of soil contamination. In the fall of 2017, internal Navy analyses of these measurements concluded that nearly half of the sampling was suspect.

The EPA performed its own review, which found data falsification and quality deficiencies were far wider and deeper than the Navy had admitted. On two major parcels covering 40% of the site, EPA found 90% of samples were suspect on one and 97% were suspect on the other. The Navy, by contrast, recommended resampling in only 15% of the samples from the first parcel and 49% of the second. In its December 27, 2017 comments on the Navy's submission, John Chesnutt, an EPA Superfund Manager, wrote:

"The data revealed not only potential purposeful falsification and fraud in terms of sample and/or data manipulation, they also reveal the potential failure to conduct adequate scans, a lack of proper chain of custody for ensuring samples were not

tampered with, extensive data quality issues (including off-site laboratory data) and general mis-management of the entire characterization and cleanup project."

"Hunters Point is unfolding into the biggest case of eco-fraud in U.S. history," stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch, who obtained the EPA review under the Freedom of Information Act. "What makes these findings so remarkable is that the Navy was on notice for years that it had a major data meltdown on its hands yet is still trying to cook the books."

This spreading data manipulation scandal obscures the true level of contamination remaining at the site. As many as a dozen years of sampling may be worthless. EPA is still reviewing the testing at other parcels covering 60% of the site, so there may be more shoes to drop. Further, there is growing concern that the standard used by the Navy for what is "clean" has also been manipulated to significantly downplay dangers.

"The Navy created an environmental nightmare on this stretch of the San Francisco Bay but instead of cleaning it up has spent the past several years compounding it," added Ruch, noting that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt claims that reforming Superfund is a top priority. "Besides being a poster child for reform of the Superfund program, this case cries out for accountability from the Navy, its contractor, and the EPA."

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Read the EPA comment summary

See Table summarizing bad rad data

View text of EPA comments

Compare the Navy submission summary

Look at EPA letter referencing ongoing reviews on other parcels

Note Pruitt's relaxed stance on radiation danger

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