UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

JUL 08 2019

The Honorable John C. Carney
Governor of Delaware
Tatnall Building
150 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
2nd Floor
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear Governor Carney:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering proposing the Blades Groundwater site (Site), located in Blades, Sussex County, Delaware, to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), pursuant to authority under Section 105 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 9605. The NPL is a list of priority sites with releases of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants that require evaluation for possible remediation. It is EPA's policy to determine the State's position on sites that EPA is considering placing on the NPL. With this letter, EPA is seeking the concurrence of the State of Delaware to propose this Site to the NPL.

The Site consists of several comingled groundwater plumes containing electroplating compounds, per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and hazardous metals commonly used in plating operations. The hazardous substances have been identified as having impacted municipal and residential drinking water wells in and near the Town of Blades. Two electroplating facilities have been identified in the area that are potential sources for this contamination, Peninsula Plating and Procino Plating.

From 2017 to 2019, EPA and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) coordinated effort to perform a Site Inspection (SI) and found electroplating compounds and PFAS in the public wells, residential wells and the greater watershed area. In response to the discovery of PFAS contamination in the wells, the EPA and DNREC investigated the two electroplating commercial businesses in the Blades area that were thought to use these types of contaminants. The extent of the groundwater plumes is not fully understood or delineated. DNREC has requested EPA's assistance with the management and remediation of this Site due to the complex nature of the hazardous chemicals and the extent of the contamination. During EPA's SI, three drinking water wells and eight residential wells were found to be contaminated. Due to the contamination, the Town of Blades installed a treatment system and started to treat the public drinking water in the spring of 2018. DNREC has installed and manages in-home treatment systems for eight residential wells which has PFAS concentration above the Health Advisory Level (HAL) of 70 parts per trillion. Currently, all drinking water meets state and federal safe drinking water standards.

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Throughout the listing and subsequent Superfund cleanup process, EPA is committed to working cooperatively with the State and local communities in an open and transparent manner. EPA will continue to attempt to find responsible parties to fund the cleanup of the property, but if no responsible parties are found, EPA will need to finance the cleanup. Prior to any fund-financed remedial action, EPA and the State will collaborate in the development of a Superfund contract to provide Delaware the assurances required by CERCLA, including but not limited to, the State's statutory cost share of 10% for the remedial action and assumption of operation and maintenance responsibilities.

With your concurrence, EPA intends to propose the Blades Groundwater Site to the NPL in the next update which is projected for fall of 2019. A written response to this letter from your office is requested by July 29, 2019, indicating whether Delaware supports proposal of the site on the NPL. Adherence to this date is critical to successfully including the Site in the fall 2019 NPL rule-making process. EPA will continue to work closely with and seek input from DNREC-SIRS as the listing process proceeds. We appreciate your consideration of this matter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or have your staff contact Mr. Paul Leonard, Acting Director, Superfund and Emergency Management Division, at 215-814-3550.

Sincerely,

Cosmo Servidio
Regional Administrator

cc: Shawn Garvin, Secretary, DNREC

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