THE CITY OF Kalamazoo

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November 30, 2015

Mr. Michael Berkoff
Remedial Project Manager
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
77 West Jackson Street
Chicago, IL 60606

RE: Formal Comments Regarding Proposed Plan for OU-1, Kalamazoo River/Portage Creek Superfund Site

Dear Mr. Berkoff:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the Proposed Plan for OU-1 (also known as the Allied Landfill site) that was published in September 2015. There has been much activity and many discussions regarding the Allied Landfill site since it was original placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1990. It is satisfying to see that one more critical step in the cleanup, reuse, and redevelopment of the Allied Landfill site has been achieved. Numerous activities, expenditures, studies, plans, and investments have been made in the areas around the site for many years. The expenditure of over $8.5 million on the former Performance Paper mill site immediately north of the Allied Landfill site, that utilized City of Kalamazoo, state and federal dollars, clearly demonstrates the City's strong commitment to redevelopment and reuse along the Portage Creek corridor in this area.

The City has historically provided a great deal of written comments to various studies, activities, and reports related to the Allied Landfill site. Comments on these included: the proposed disposal of PCB-contaminated sediment from the Kalamazoo River onto OU-1 in 2007; the March 2008 Remedial Investigation Report; the 2009 Groundwater Study (Arcadis); the February 2013 Feasibility Study Report; the 2014 Groundwater Data Evaluation Report; the June 2015 Feasibility Study Addendum; and the September 2015 Recommended Plan. The comments provided in this letter supersede all these previous technical and associated comments that have been submitted by the City of Kalamazoo. Given recent discussions and input from the City, the majority of the previous comments and concerns have been adequately addressed.

Staff from the City, State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)-Region 5 have been meeting extensively since early 2013 to discuss potential remedies and possible plans for the Allied Landfill site. I wish to express my gratitude for the USEPA-Region 5's willingness to provide for these numerous opportunities for City input and, later on, more extensive public education and input related to various plans and options for the Allied Landfill site.

I wish to echo City of Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell's recent letter (dated August 21, 2015) where he indicated the City is supportive of the additional option (Option 2D) that was detailed recently in the USEPA-Region 5's amended Feasibility Study for OU-1. While it does not provide for the total removal of all contaminants at OU-1, which is the City's preference, the City believes it provides a reasonable alternative and meets the mutual goals of protectiveness, connectedness, accessibility and productivity for the OU-1 site.

The City is strongly committed to the ongoing joint stewardship and partnership regarding the Allied Landfill site and surrounding areas. An ongoing partnership with USEPA-Region 5 and the MDEQ will ensure that adequate redevelopment and recreation will be implemented and maintained for the site and the entire Portage Creek Corridor. The City of Kalamazoo is vitally interested and wishes to be involved with the overall long-term management and local oversight of the Allied Landfill site.

This partnership and joint stewardship will involve short-term and long-term concerns centered around three key areas: a) public access and recreation; b) areas set aside for economic development; and, c) ongoing groundwater monitoring and assessment.

In the short term, the City looks to be involved with the future site design and implementation for the proposed Option 2D for the Allied Landfill site. The City desires to see how best public access, especially a key segment of the Portage Creek Trailway extension south toward the City of Portage, is incorporated into the design. The City also understands that there are various geotechnical and wetland buffer areas that will need to be addressed for the entire site as well as along Portage Creek. In addition, EPA recognizes the geotechnical design challenges associated with consolidating material at a much higher elevation than the current site configuration. EPA has acknowledged that these design considerations must be addressed during the remedial design phase. It is anticipated that the City staff will participate in this process and the City believes it can provide key information and insight into the design and implementation of the overall proposed remedy.

Issues associated with economic redevelopment of various portions of the Allied Landfill site are also areas that the City believes it can provide key short-term (as well as long-term) input. Included in these short-term input is the City's acquisition of the former Panelyte site that is adjacent to the Allied Landfill site. This acquisition will greatly assist with the overall remedy implementation for the site.

Finally, in the short term, as USEPA-Region 5 looks to developing and implementing groundwater monitoring plans for the Allied Landfill site, the City strongly desires to provide input in the development

and implementation of this crucial part of the proposed plan. City staff are looking forward to meetings in the near future regarding the ongoing stewardship of the groundwater within the city that has the potential to be impacted negatively by a number of sources within the areas surrounding the city's Central Wellfield.

I will be encouraging City staff to maintain this critical dialogue with the appropriate state and federal representatives to ensure that adequate groundwater monitoring plans are properly developed and implemented for OU-1. It is certainly appropriate to give the groundwater under the Allied Landfill site additional consideration. The City appreciates the additional site characterization and groundwater monitoring that was conducted in 2014. This characterization and monitoring has reduced the uncertainty of contaminant fate and has significantly reduced the City's concerns. The City recognizes that any remedy that includes leaving material onsite must include long-term monitoring of the groundwater to ensure the effectiveness of the remedy and the protection of the City's wellfields.

On a long-term basis, the City recognizes the need to ensure that designed features for the Allied Landfill site that have been appropriately implemented will need to be overseen and monitored. Within the public access and recreation area, the City anticipates it will be involved with future programming, oversight, and monitoring of activities within the remediated areas. This would include working closely with Kalamazoo County to ensure adequate oversight and maintenance of trailway areas within the site. In addition, future monitoring and possible programming of various passive recreation activities on the remediated site could be coordinated by the City and could possibly involve some County input and involvement. The City desires to be involved with the coordination of efforts regarding long-term oversight and ownership of the capped areas that will become public recreation areas. It is appropriate that such areas have local government involvement, oversight, as well as operation and maintenance activities for the site where adequate funding is available to conduct such responsibilities.

For long-term involvement involving remediated properties that have been appropriately delisted and prepared for redevelopment, the City fully intends to facilitate and actively assist in marketing of these properties as part of the ongoing redevelopment activities at the site. The City will also endeavor to assist with the development of any necessary deed restrictions, ordinances, or other environmental covenants that may be need to appropriately create opportunities for public access, recreation, and economic redevelopment of the remediated Allied Landfill site.

Finally, the City's involvement in long-term groundwater monitoring efforts is critical for ongoing stewardship of the City's public drinking water supply. The City desires to be involved with data collection, assessment, and evaluation as it seeks to ensure that adequate protection of the City's water supply continues in partnership with USEPA-Region 5 and the MDEQ. This will include involvement in the formal effectiveness and protectiveness reviews by USEPA-Region 5 and MDEQ every five years to ensure that the implemented remedy is still protective of the City's vital groundwater resource.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the USEPA-Region 5 and MDEQ staff for their desire to include the City of Kalamazoo in the Superfund process and for the opportunity to submit these comments. The City of Kalamazoo intends to stay keenly involved with the Allied Landfill site through the design and implementation stage and on a long-term basis. City staff looks forward to working closely with the USEPA-Region 5 now and in the future to ensure access, redevelopment, recreational activities, groundwater protection, and oversight at OU-1 are achieved and enhanced.

Sincerely,

James Ritsema, ICMA-CM
City Manager

cc: D. Russell, USEPA-Region 5
Mayor Hopewell and City Commissioners