WEST VIRGINIA Department of Health & Human Resources

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 23, 2014

Contacts:
Allison Adler
(304) 558-7899
allison.c.adler@wv.gov

Lawrence Messina
304-957-2515
Lawrence.C.Messina@wv.gov

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Initial retesting concluded today has revealed no detectable levels of PPH, the material that Freedom Industries failed to disclose as being present in the storage tank that leaked into the Elk River on Jan. 9, 2014. These results indicate no health concerns, based on the latest guidance provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To ensure the protection of public health, the interagency team plans to pursue more aggressive testing of water samples for PPH.

The team retested 30 samples drawn since Jan. 10 from the intake and outflow at West Virginia American Water Co.'s treatment plant. The methodology for testing for PPH, developed on Wednesday, Jan. 22, included a detection limit at 2 parts per million. That retesting, concluded earlier today, returned "No Detect" readings for all 30 samples at that detection limit.

Those results are attached and will be posted online. The team plans to pursue additional testing at a detection limit of 1 ppm.

Officials also report that a review of water quality tests routinely conducted at the treatment plan show no sign of phenol, a chemical byproduct that should appear if PPH reacted with water treatment processes. Spectrometer readings conducted since the Jan. 9 leak have also shown no decomposition product of PPH or the phenol byproduct.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has approved the team's pursuit of testing as the CDC continues to research an appropriate testing threshold for PPH.

CDC officials have so far cited available toxicological information on PPH to report that the toxicity of this material appears to be lower than the toxicity of MCHM. The CDC also considers it likely that any amount of PPH currently in the water system would be extremely low. State officials remain in contact with CDC.

Dr. Vikas Kapil, Chief Medical Officer & Acting Deputy Director at the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, has said "An initial review of the currently available toxicological information does not suggest any new health concerns associated with the release of PPH."

###