Vicky Binetti of Region 3's Water Program reported that on Tuesday, February 11, Gov. Tomblin announced that a household drinking water sampling study would be performed in the 9-county area where water service was impacted by the Freedom Chemical spill. The sampling project, called WV TAP (Testing Assessment Project), will be conducted by independent scientific experts, led by Andrew Whelton of Southern Alabama University and Jeffrey Rosen of Corona Environmental Consulting.

The study will consider the nature of plumbing materials, addressing a concern that MCHM might leave residual traces, for example, in residential pipes and hot water heaters. EPA Region 3 and Headquarters staff had provided technical advice on the sampling effort to WV Department of Health and Human Resources and other State officials on sampling design concepts, but the study scope and protocol are not completely known at this time. Additionally, the project is charged with determining the odor threshold for MCHM, and conducting an independent review of the protective level of 1 ppm for MCHM.

OSC Dennis Matlock reported the facility gave the WV Department of Highways the required 48-hour notice that they were planning to begin excavation operations adjacent to Barlow Road. Therefore, ditch clearing will begin on Friday, February 14. The facility is hoping to identify one of the off-Site water sources and divert the water away from the facility.

The facility's plan is to remove of all product from the site, then begin cleaning and dismantling the tanks. Some of the tanks will remain to be used for temporary water storage and treatment of the water, as the tanks have aeration capability.

The Chemical Safety Board (CSB) is working with the Attorney General Office and is awaiting plaintiffs' comments prior to beginning their physical investigation, which will involve mapping the MCHM tanks and removing a section of tank 396, which leaked. This portion of their investigation will last for approximately one week.

The flow rate of the off-site water into the containment area is estimated to be 5 gallons per hour. The facility's contractor continues to oversee water pumping operations.