FACT SHEET
West Lake Landfill, Bridgeton, Missouri

QUESTION: Why hasn't EPA proposed to excavate the radiological waste at West Lake Landfill, to be consistent with the ongoing excavation of similar radiological waste at the nearby St. Louis Airport sites (SLAPS)?

ANSWER:

- While the wastes are similar at both sites, the pathways for people to be exposed to the material at West Lake and SLAPS are very different.
- West Lake is fenced to prevent access, and the groundwater beneath the site is not being used for drinking water. There are no current exposures to people.
- The radiological waste at SLAPS is mainly at the surface along roads where the public could be exposed.
- Existing risk assessments indicate that the West Lake waste can be safely managed by capping in place as selected in the 2008 Record of Decision (ROD). However, due to extensive public interest, EPA is currently re-evaluating the ROD remedy and several excavation remedies in more detail.

BACKGROUND:

- EPA completed a Supplemental Feasibility Study (SFS) in 2011 that re-evaluated the Record of Decision (ROD) remedy of cap-in-place as well as full excavation of the radiological waste with off-site or on-site disposal.
- Region 7 presented the results of the SFS to the National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) as an "early consultation" in February 2012, and the NRRB comments from this consultation resulted in additional evaluations. The additional evaluations, including an evaluation of a partial excavation alternative, are in work now by the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) and will result in an addendum to the SFS report.
- The Lambert-St. Louis Airport Authority has expressed considerable interest in the remedy to be selected, and has stated in writing that it views excavation of landfill waste so close to the airport to constitute a bird strike hazard to aircraft.
- Questions received on this and related issues from Sens. McCaskill and Blunt, Reps. Lacy Clay and Wagner [OPA TO CHECK THIS LIST FOR COMPLETENESS & ACCURACY]

QUESTION: What is EPA doing about the landfill fire or "subsurface smoldering event" at West Lake?

ANSWER:

- The landfill fire at West Lake is occurring underground in a non-radiological waste disposal cell at the site which was permitted by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). As the regulatory authority for this waste disposal cell, MDNR is responsible for responding to the landfill fire.

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- EPA and MDNR communicate regularly on the status of the fire and the PRPs' efforts to contain and put out the fire.

BACKGROUND:

- The landfill fire was first discovered in December 2010 and reported to MDNR and EPA.
- The landfill fire began to receive extensive press coverage in late 2012 when odors from the fire increased and began to generate complaints from local residents and businesses.
- The landfill fire area is more than 1,000 feet from the nearest area of radiological waste.
- Questions received on this and related issues from Sens. McCaskill and Blunt, Reps. Lacy Clay and Wagner [OPA TO CHECK THIS LIST FOR COMPLETENESS & ACCURACY]

RESOURCES

The site is PRP-lead, meaning that the PRPs (including the U.S. Department of Energy) are paying for the additional studies and site work, and are reimbursing EPA staff for its time in overseeing the work.

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