



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

May 18, 2009

Bob Adams
12 Morris Road
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002

Fred Conner
420 Mallard Circle
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania 19422

Re: EPA comments for inclusion in the May 6, 2009 CAG meeting minutes.

Dear Mr. Adams and Mr. Conner,

As discussed during the Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting on May 6, 2009, EPA is submitting clarifications to several questions that were asked during the meeting. I am requesting to have these clarifications added to the minutes and to be sent out to the general members of the CAG.

Have geocells been used as a stabilization method on other waste sites in the country?

Geocells have been successfully implemented on the former Ambler Asbestos Superfund Site. The geocells at the former Superfund site were filled with concrete. At the BoRit Superfund Site, the geocells are being filled with soil and stone. There are sections of the geocells structure at the former Superfund site that are scheduled for maintenance this Fall, but the maintenance is for repairing erosion of the stream bank around it. The geocells structure has remained intact and functional since it was installed in 1992.

It is important to note that EPA has been working closely with the United States Army Corps of Engineers on the design of the stream bank stabilization. They have supported the designs for the BoRit Superfund Site.

Any questions regarding the former Ambler Asbestos Superfund Site should be directed to the Remedial Project Manager, Jim Feeney, at (215) 814-3190.

Are there any grant programs from the Health Departments for a specialized X-Ray machine to be located in Ambler to help diagnose pleural plaques?

The health agencies are currently looking into this question and will advise the CAG accordingly.



How much asbestos containing material (ACM) has been removed from the site? Has anything been removed from the easement portion of the site?

Large pieces of ACM were removed, when possible, during the stream bank stabilization. Approximately 460 tons of material was sent to a landfill. It is important to note that the 460 tons includes organic material (soil, vegetation, etc.), contaminated soil, and ACM. Any soil or organic material that was suspected of being contaminated was treated as suspected waste, and disposed of properly. In addition to materials other than ACM being included in the waste amount, dust suppression was used while picking up and consolidating the pile, which made the materials wet and added to the weight.

What are the 9 criteria and how are they ranked in importance?

By law, EPA is required to conduct a detailed analysis of remedial alternatives considered for a Superfund site, using nine specific criteria. The nine criteria are grouped into 3 categories: threshold criteria, balancing criteria, and modifying criteria.

The two threshold criteria are the minimum requirements that each alternative must fulfill in order to be considered a potential remedy. These include:

1. Overall Protection of Human Health and the Environment
2. Compliance with Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs)
 - The remedy may need to comply with other environmental laws, as well as state laws.

The five balancing criteria are used to conduct a detailed analysis of the alternatives. These criteria include:

3. Long-term Effectiveness and Permanence
 - The alternatives are evaluated to ensure they are protective over time.
4. Reduction of Toxicity, Mobility, or Volume through Treatment
 - The remedy must ensure that the risk posed by the site is mitigated through some kind of treatment.
5. Short-Term Effectiveness
 - Risks associated with the construction of the remedy are considered.
6. Implementability
 - The difficulty of constructing the remedy is taken into consideration.
7. Cost Effectiveness
 - Capital, operation, and maintenance costs are compared to other, equally-protective alternatives.

The two modifying criteria are used to modify the preferred remedial action alternative. These two criteria are:

8. State Acceptance
9. Community Acceptance



New information or comments made during the Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) comment period may either modify the preferred alternative or lead to consideration of another alternative. EPA must respond to all significant comments during the comment period in a Responsiveness Summary.

What is the disclosure responsibility for the EPA if waste is kept in place (signs, fences, etc.)?

The site will be cleaned up to ensure it is protective of human health and the environment. If asbestos waste is kept in place, the remedy must comply with ARARs. Under this possible remedial action, the remedy would have to comply with National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) Part 61 Subpart M for asbestos, which would require actions to prevent the emission of asbestos fibers from disposal sites. These actions may include installation of cover materials, warning signs, security fencing, or other approved actions.

It is important to note that the site will be cleaned to ensure it is protective to the appropriate clean up goals. For instance, if an area is to be used as a residential property, EPA would clean the site to ensure the contamination is not hazardous to residents based on risk calculations. The same would go for recreational or commercial uses.

Are there any protections that may be offered to a potential buyer of a parcel of the site to free the buyer of liability?

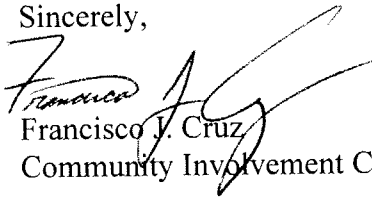
Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), there is a liability exemption for Bona Fide Prospective Purchasers. To qualify, a prospective purchaser must demonstrate that certain legal criteria are met, including, but not limited to: acquiring the property after January 11th, 2002; not being a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP); not being affiliated with a PRP; and must have undertaken "all appropriate inquiry" into the previous ownership of the site. The prospective purchaser must also fulfill certain obligations, including but not limited to, providing cooperation, assistance, and access to the EPA.

It is strongly recommended that a prospective purchaser consult with an attorney to see if he or she qualifies as a Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser.

In addition to the above clarifications, EPA would like to make a recommendation regarding future requests for information. Although the CAG has the option of requesting TASC services for informational purposes, EPA has many resources available within the Regional Office and from across the country. For instance, EPA has people that would be able to give a presentation regarding possible land reuse. Please do not hesitate to speak with the Community Involvement Coordinators regarding options for EPA to provide information.

I hope you found this explanation to be helpful. If you have any questions, please contact me at (215)814-5528.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francisco J. Cruz". The signature is stylized and overlaps with the printed name below it.

Francisco J. Cruz
Community Involvement Coordinator