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VIA FACSIMILE

Anna Krasko
Remedial Project Manager
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 1
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100 (HBO)
Boston, MA 02203

Re: Centredale Manor Restoration Project Superfund Site

Dear Ms. Krasko:

On behalf of Emhart Industries, Inc. ("Emhart"), we hereby submit the following comments regarding the Final Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis for the Centredale Manor Restoration Project Superfund Site in North Providence, Rhode Island.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the request of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"), Tetra Tech NUS, Inc. ("Tetra Tech") prepared an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis ("EE/CA") for the Centredale Manor Restoration Project Superfund Site (Final Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, Centredale Manor Restoration Project Site, North Providence, Rhode Island; Tetra Tech NUS, Inc., September 2000). The goal of the EE/CA was to develop a proposed Non-Time Critical Removal Action ("NTCRA") to address alleged risks to human health from exposure to residential soils and river sediments on the eastern bank of the Woonasquatucket River, in North Providence, Rhode Island. Tetra Tech evaluated four removal alternatives and three disposal options and selected Alternative 3 with Disposal Option 3, Excavate Residential Soils and Flood Plain Sediments and Restore Allendale Dam with off-site incineration and disposal of the excavated material, as the recommended removal alternative. Tetra Tech concluded that the combination of Alternative 3 and Disposal Option 3 will be most effective at meeting the objectives of a removal action (*i.e.*, each alternative's effectiveness, implementability and cost).

Emhart supports the selection of Alternative 3 with Disposal Option 3. Emhart agrees that, of the alternatives evaluated, the preferred alternative is the one that best meets the removal action objectives. Nevertheless, Emhart would like to take this opportunity to address a few issues that EPA has not adequately considered in its evaluation of the proposed NTCRA.

II. COMMENTS

A. Source and Nature of Contamination at the Site

The EE/CA erroneously assumes that the sole source of contaminants at the Site is 2072 and 2074 Smith Street (the Brook Village and Centredale Manor properties). Therefore, EPA is proposing to the implement the NTCRA before it has fully identified, and put on notice, other potentially responsible parties ("PRPs") at the Site. As EPA is well aware, the Woonasquatucket River has been the center of industrial activity since the Industrial Revolution. Numerous industrial facilities have been located, and still are located, along the banks of the Woonasquatucket River, including several mills. In the past two years, EPA has investigated and cited a number of manufacturing facilities for violations of hazardous waste laws. Today, the Smithfield sewage treatment plant continues to discharge pollutants, including raw sewage, into the River. Furthermore, the Site is situated on a 100-year floodplain where flooding of property along the river banks is reported to be frequent. These floods are likely to have deposited contaminants from other sources on the properties located along the River, including 2072 and 2074 Smith Street. It is unlikely that the only source of contamination in the river sediments is these two properties. Also, the customers of the drum reconditioning facility that operated at the Site have not been fully identified or noticed. EPA should complete its PRP identification process, including all upstream sources of contamination, and ensure that those parties have an opportunity to comment on the EE/CA and participate in the creation of the administrative record before implementing the proposed NTCRA.

Moreover, the EE/CA focuses solely on dioxin as the contaminant of concern, but the cost of the proposed NTCRA will include the cost of treating for these other contaminants as well. Sampling has discovered the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls ("PCBs"), pesticides, metals, polyaromatic hydrocarbons ("PAHs"), and a number of volatile organic compounds ("VOCs") and semi-volatile organic compounds ("SVOCs"). EPA and Tetra Tech have assumed that Alternative 3 will address contaminants in addition to the dioxin but have not adequately investigated the source(s) of these contaminants and the PRPs potentially liable therefor. The National Contingency Plan contemplates that the parties responsible for the contamination will be identified and notified prior to the conduct of significant remedial action.

B. Bifurcation of Cleanup

The proposed NTCRA is designed to address alleged risks to human health at the Site. EPA is currently performing an ecological risk assessment to investigate any potential risks to plants and animals. EPA intends to implement the proposed NTCRA before completing a full

ecological risk assessment. Emhart believes that it would be more efficient and cost-effective to complete the ecological risk assessment before implementing the proposed NTCRA. As part of the NTCRA, EPA will incur costs for mobilization, demobilization, pre-design investigation, site preparation, and site restoration. If EPA implements a removal action at a later date to address any alleged ecological risks, it will likely incur the same costs for a second time. Since EPA does not intend to begin NTCRA activities for at least 6 months, there is no justification for not completing the ecological risk assessment and proposing a comprehensive removal action instead of bifurcating the cleanup.

C. Repair and Maintenance of the Allendale Dam

A significant component of the NTCRA is the repair and maintenance of the Allendale Dam. Prior to 1989, the dam was owned by Allendale Mill Associates Limited Partnership, as part of the property that was developed into the Mill at Allendale Condominium. In 1989, Allendale Mill Associates Limited Partnership conveyed the property, including the dam, to ANPC Associates Limited Partnership. Presumably, at some later time, ANPC Associates Limited Partnership conveyed ownership of the property to the condominium association for the Mill at Allendale Condominium, which owned the dam until at least 1996.[1] Emhart is not aware of the current owner of the dam. Emhart believes that it was the prior and current owners' obligation to maintain the dam and such owners should be held responsible for its repair. In addition, the current owner of the dam should be held responsible for maintaining the dam once it is repaired. It is inequitable for EPA to hold others responsible for the neglect of the dam by its prior owners or to maintain the property of the current owner.

Finally, according to Steve Pitassi, a member of the Allendale Dam Restoration Committee, significant work has already been performed toward the reparation of the dam. Mr. Pitassi has indicated that design plans have been completed and are currently in the possession of the Army Corps of Engineers. Moreover, some of the $570,000 EPA estimates it will cost to repair the dam has been earmarked by the federal, state and local governments. By 1996, Congress had allocated $250,000 for dam repairs, with the state and local governments contributing approximately $80,000 more. The EPA should use these monies to fund at least a portion of the dam reparation activities.

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[1] At that time, the condominium association agreed to transfer title to the dam to the Allendale Dam Restoration Committee, pending approval by the individual condominium owners and their lending institutions. C.J. Chivers, "Money secured for dam project," Providence Journal-Bulletin (September 25, 1996). Emhart is not aware if the transfer occurred.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Emhart supports EPA's recommendation of Alternative 3. Emhart, however, believes that there needs to be a more comprehensive effort to identify and notify the other contributors to the contamination of the site, to reduce the waste of resources inherent in the bifurcation of the cleanup, and to utilize the available design plans and funding for reparation of the dam. In so doing, EPA could implement a more efficient and cost-effective removal action, that would meet the objectives of a removal action.

Sincerely,

Jerome C. Muys, Jr.

cc: Catherine Garypie