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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Proposes Superfund Cleanup Plan for Upper and Lower New Bedford Harbor



Public Comment Invited

Superfund Records Center
SITE: NEW BEDFORD
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After an extensive process of studying New Bedford Harbor and developing consensus for a solution to its PCB contamination, the EPA has developed a proposed cleanup plan for the upper and lower Harbor areas. These areas comprise approximately 1000 acres of the 18,000 acre New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site. EPA invites public comment on the proposal (summarized below) as well as on all of the other cleanup alternatives contained in the August 1990 Feasibility Study. The comment period will begin Nov. 7 and continue through Dec. 9, 1996. EPA will select the final remedy after consideration of all comments received as a result of this public comment process.

EPA will hold an informational meeting on Nov. 6, at 6 p.m. at the New Bedford Vocational Technical High School in New Bedford, MA to discuss the cleanup proposal and other remedial alternatives. From 6 to 7 p.m. poster boards on the proposal will be displayed for citizens to browse and ask questions before presentations begin at 7 p.m. EPA will then begin a 34-day comment period from Nov. 7 through Dec. 9. During the comment period, the public is invited to review the feasibility study and other site related documents, which are available at the information repositories listed below, and to offer written or oral comments.

EPA will also hold a formal public hearing on Nov. 20 at 6 p.m. at the New Bedford Vocational Technical High School to accept oral comments on the cleanup alternatives for the upper and lower harbor. The hearing will be transcribed and a copy of the transcript will be available at the information repositories.

The alternatives evaluated to address contamination in the upper and lower harbor can be grouped into one of the following five categories:

- 1) No action (monitoring and access restrictions only);
- 2) Capping contaminated sediments in place;
- 3) Dredging contaminated sediments and isolation of them in shoreline confined disposal facilities (CDFs);
- 4) Dredging and treatment of contaminated sediments, and disposal of the treated sediments in shoreline CDFs; and
- 5) Different combinations of the above four approaches.

EPA's preferred remedy involves the following:

- dredge approximately 450,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment currently spread over about 170 acres of the harbor. In the upper harbor, sediments above 10 parts per million (ppm) would be dredged, while in the lower harbor and in saltmarshes, sediments above 50 ppm would be dredged;
- construct four shoreline CDFs to contain and isolate the dredged sediments from the public and the marine ecosystem;
- drain the water from the sediments once they are placed in the CDFs and treat the water to remove contaminants before returning the water to the harbor;
- construct an impermeable cover or cap on top of the CDF once sediments have sufficiently settled to allow for construction (approximately three years after final placement in the CDF)
- long term monitoring and maintenance of the CDFs to ensure their integrity; and
- potential reuse of the completed CDFs as commercial marine facilities or as shoreline open space

The Feasibility Study and the site's Administrative Record, which includes documents that will form the basis of EPA's selection are available at:

Wilks Branch Library
1911 Acushnet Ave.
New Bedford, MA 02745
(508) 991-6214

EPA Record Center, OSSR
90 Canal Street
Boston, MA 02203
(508) 573-5729

Hours: M-F 10 am-1 pm & 2-5 pm

All written comments must be postmarked no later than Dec. 9 and addressed Mr. David Dickerson, EPA Project Manager, JFK Federal Bldg., HBO, Boston, MA 02203.