

The public will have the following opportunities to learn more about the proposed activities at the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site, and specifically about the proposed phase II remedy for the upper and lower harbor.

On Nov. 6 at 6 p.m., EPA will hold an informal public meeting at the New Bedford Vocational Technical High School on Ashley Boulevard. From 6 to 7 p.m. graphic poster boards on the proposal will be displayed for citizens to browse and ask questions before the presentations begin at 7 p.m., when the EPA will describe the proposal and answer questions.

On Nov. 20 at 6 p.m. the EPA will hold a formal public hearing at the New Bedford Vocational Technical High School. During the hearing, the public is invited to provide formal oral comments on the proposed cleanup plan. Comments taken at the formal hearing will be recorded as part of the official public record.

The EPA will also accept written comments on the proposed cleanup plan from Nov. 7 through Dec. 9. All comments will be addressed in a document called a responsiveness summary, which will be placed for review at the Wilks Branch Library in New Bedford and at the EPA Record Center in Boston.

Written comments should be submitted to:

David Dickerson
U.S.EPA, Region I
JFK Federal Bldg, HBO
Boston, MA 02203

The New Bedford Harbor Superfund site encompasses 18,000 acres of New Bedford Harbor and parts of Buzzards Bay. The primary contaminants at the site are the result of past disposal of PCB contaminated process wastes from industries along the Acushnet River and Buzzards Bay. In 1977, testing of edible fish tissue revealed PCB levels in excess of U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines. As a result, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has restricted fishing in areas of New Bedford Harbor and Buzzards Bay.

In 1983, the EPA added the site to the National Priorities List of hazardous waste sites eligible for Superfund cleanup funds. Massachusetts has designated the New Bedford Harbor site as its top priority federal Superfund site.

The EPA has conducted and continues to conduct extensive studies of the nature and extent of PCB contamination in the harbor. In 1990, EPA signed a Record of Decision to dredge the most contaminated hot spot sediment and treat the sediment by on-site incineration (Phase I). However, due to public disapproval, EPA is re-evaluating this remedy and currently conducting on-site treatability studies for an alternative treatment technology.

Once treatability tests are completed, EPA will issue a separate proposed plan for treatment of the Phase I sediments to solicit public comments on the preferred technology. The hot spots were dredged in 1994-1995 and are currently being contained in an on-site confined disposal facility.

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