



## EPA ANNOUNCES AN EXPLANATION OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN THE RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE CLEANUP OF NEW BEDFORD HARBOR

In accordance with section 117 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed an explanation of significant differences (ESD) to document changes in the cleanup plan for the Hot Spot portion of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site.

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### BACKGROUND

The 1990 Record of Decision calls for dredging sediment from the northernmost portion of the harbor with polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination of over 4000 parts per million, de-watering the sediment, treating the resulting water in an on-site wastewater treatment plant, and incinerating the dewatered sediment at the foot of Sawyer Street in a temporary incinerator. According to the Record of Decision, a method of disposal for the ash produced by the incineration is to be determined as part of the second cleanup plan, which addresses the rest of the estuary, the lower harbor, and parts of Buzzards Bay, and is currently open for public comment.

### EXPLANATION OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

EPA has decided to resolve the issue of ash disposal now instead of waiting until a Record of Decision for the second operable unit is final. During the design of the Hot Spot remedy, EPA conducted a pilot study which, among other things, tested the effectiveness of the confined disposal facilities (CDFs) included in the remedy. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers concluded that CDFs are a viable system for the disposal of ash. Therefore, EPA has decided to designate a confined disposal facility for the disposal of ash produced as a result of incineration of the Hot Spot sediments.

The shoreline CDF constructed during the pilot study will be used for the Hot Spot remediation. The CDF will be partially excavated and lined with an impermeable membrane to receive the Hot Spot sediments. After settling and de-watering, the Hot Spot sediments will be removed from the CDF for incineration. The incinerated sediment, or ash, will be returned to the CDF for final disposal. The ash will be tested to determine if it is a hazardous waste, and treated by solidification if it is found to be hazardous. The ash will then be covered with a multi-layer, impermeable cap in accordance with hazardous waste disposal requirements in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The CDF will also include a leachate monitoring and collection system to ensure the effectiveness of the system.

This change does not alter the overall remedy. The remedy remains protective of human health and the environment, complies with federal and state requirements, and is cost effective. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection concurs with the change.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

A copy of the ESD is available for public review in the Administrative Record, maintained at the information repositories listed below along with all other information about the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site.

New Bedford Public Library  
613 Pleasant Street  
New Bedford, MA  
(508) 991-6275

EPA Records Center  
90 Canal Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
(617) 573-5729

Comments or questions concerning the ESD or the site in general may be addressed to:

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