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# Environmental News

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## EPA RELEASES STUDY FOR NEW BEDFORD HARBOR CLEANUP

BOSTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has completed a Feasibility Study for the second portion of the cleanup of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

The Feasibility Study (FS) outlines nine different cleanup alternatives for the estuary, lower harbor and bay portions of the site. The FS also includes a site description, a summary of public health and ecological risks, and an evaluation of various treatment technologies. Copies of the FS are available at the New Bedford Free Library, the Millicent Library in Fairhaven, and the EPA records center in Boston.

EPA is currently developing a proposed cleanup plan for the estuary, lower harbor and bay which will be available to the public in September. The Proposed Plan will briefly describe the cleanup alternatives found in the FS and indicate which alternative EPA feels is most appropriate for the site.

EPA will hold a public meeting to present the Proposed Plan on Wednesday, September 26 at the Days Inn on Hathaway Road in New Bedford at 7:30 pm. The meeting will mark the start of a 30 day public comment period when EPA will accept comments on the FS and the proposed cleanup plan. EPA will also hold a public hearing on October 11 to accept oral comments. After review of all comments, EPA will issue a final cleanup plan, known as a Record of Decision (ROD), sometime this winter.

This second ROD will complement an earlier cleanup plan finalized in April to address contamination in an area known as the "Hot Spot." The first ROD calls for dredging sediment contaminated with polychlorinated biphenals (PCBs) in the Hot Spot section of the estuary and incinerating the sediment in a temporary treatment facility on shore. This portion of the New Bedford Harbor cleanup is expected to take approximately one year from the completion of its design and cost roughly \$14.3 million.

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EPA is has filed suit against five companies which owned or operated two electrical capacitor manufacturing plants adjacent to New Bedford Harbor. The lawsuit seeks to recover the costs EPA has incurred or will incur for remedial activities at the site as well as for damages to natural resources.

The New Bedford Harbor Superfund site encompasses an 18,000 acre area of New Bedford Harbor and parts of Buzzards Bay. The primary contaminants at the site are PCBs resulting from past disposal of contaminated process wastes from industries along the Acushnet River. 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 1982, 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.

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