



# ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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PAT QUINN, GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS P. SCOTT, DIRECTOR

November 23, 2011

Senator Sue Rezin  
103 Fifth Street  
P.O. Box 260  
Peru, Illinois 61354

Refer to: 0110300003 – Bureau County  
New Jersey Zinc/Mobil Chemical  
Superfund/Technical Reports

Dear Senator Rezin:

This letter serves as update #2, regarding the current status of work completed and expected to be completed in the near-term for the New Jersey Zinc Superfund site in DePue, Illinois. The DePue Group, consisting of the two responsible parties for the site, CBS Corporation and ExxonMobil Corporation, is conducting investigation and response actions at the site pursuant to an Interim Consent Order and under Illinois Environmental Protection Agency oversight. The site has been a National Priorities List Superfund site since 1999.

## Current Status:

**Operable Unit 1 – South Ditch:** The South Ditch underwent an interim remedy in 2005. Any future work at the South Ditch will be conducted as part of Operable Unit 5, Lake DePue. Pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the South Ditch must undergo review every five years. The first review was conducted in 2010, and concluded that the interim remedy remains protective of human health and the environment in the short term because access is restricted and significantly contaminated sediments have been removed. The next five year review is scheduled for 2015.

**Operable Unit 2 – Phosphogypsum Stack:** Additional groundwater monitoring wells were installed in early October in order to determine the extent of contamination in groundwater migrating from the stack area, particularly to the northwest and southeast. Wells to the south are also planned, and are anticipated to be installed after mid-December, when the work will not interfere with the duck-hunting season. These wells will be installed south of Lake DePue, in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Dredged Soil Disposal Area. The DePue Group anticipates providing a comprehensive hydrogeological study that incorporates this work to Illinois EPA in summer, 2012.

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Radon-222 testing was conducted on the phosphogypsum stack during the last week in July and Illinois EPA has received a report for review. Illinois EPA's cursory review indicates the results of the testing were well below the 20 picoCurie per square meter regulatory standard.

This testing was done pursuant to a work plan reviewed by USEPA, Region 5 and Illinois EPA. USEPA had a representative on-site during the first day of sampling to observe sampling activities. Illinois EPA will review the report, but will defer to USEPA regarding the adequacy of the effort, since Illinois EPA has no regulatory authority in this matter. A copy of the report has been forwarded to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency for their information. A copy of the report has also been forwarded to DePue Village President Eric Bryant and the DePue Citizens' Advisory Group (CAG).

**Operable Unit 3 – Former Plant Site Area:** Test pits in a six-acre dump area near the South Ditch were completed in mid-October to determine the types of waste materials present in the dump. Results of this activity will be incorporated into the forthcoming remedial investigation report for the plant area. The DePue Group anticipates submittal of the remedial investigation report early in calendar year 2012.

**Operable Unit 4 – Off-Site Soils:** Negotiations are still underway regarding the submittal of a work plan by the DePue Group. The work plan is anticipated to encompass investigation and remediation proposals for potentially contaminated soils found in residential areas and other property throughout the Village. Illinois EPA is mapping out an approach that will allow for expedited removal of contamination if discovered.

**Operable Unit 5 – Lake DePue:** Illinois EPA provided responses to the Village on their comments regarding the human health and ecological risk assessments in mid-September. The DePue Group is working on responses to Village comments forwarded to them. Illinois EPA is reviewing additional comments from the Northwestern University Bluhm Legal Clinic submitted on behalf of the Village and received on November 16, 2011.

**Community Outreach:** On September 18, Illinois EPA conducted an informational session at St. Mary's Church in DePue in order to hear the concerns of the local Hispanic community about the Superfund site. Village President Eric Bryant, and some other members of the CAG were also in attendance. A brief summary of the current status of the site was provided and questions were taken from the audience. The audience seemed appreciative of Illinois EPA's visit and a couple of attendees expressed interest in joining the CAG.

**Interim Consent Order:** Illinois EPA is currently in discussion with the Office of the Illinois Attorney General and the DePue Group regarding modification of the interim consent order using the "informal amendment" provision of the current consent order.

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This will allow certain changes to be made to the interim consent order and incorporation of a schedule without causing delay in current site activities.

Illinois EPA anticipates providing the next update to you during mid-February. Please feel free to contact Illinois EPA at any time with any questions or concerns you may have. You may reach me at 217-785-2891 or at [Charlene.Falco@illinois.gov](mailto:Charlene.Falco@illinois.gov).

Sincerely,



Charlene Falco

Project Manager

Federal Site Remediation Section

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