



# New Bedford Harbor **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

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**2025**  
**November**

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# INTRODUCTION

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The goal of this Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is to encourage and facilitate community engagement as EPA moves from active remedial work to the operations and maintenance and monitoring phase of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site (Site) cleanup. The CIP describes how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has and will continue to involve the community and address local needs during the Superfund process. EPA and the community will work together by using the tools described in this plan. Active public involvement is crucial to the success of any project. EPA's community involvement activities at the Site are designed to inform the public of all cleanup activities and include the community in the decision-making process.

EPA defines the "community" as those people and entities who have an interest in or are affected by the Site. EPA also recognizes that other stakeholders, including local, state and federal agencies, may have an interest in the Site. This CIP is based on a series of community interviews conducted in May and June 2025 with the community and stakeholders in accordance with EPA's Superfund community involvement and cleanup guidance. The CIP is a "living document," meaning that it can be updated or revised over the course of site cleanup to reflect long-term changes in the community.

## Community Involvement at the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site

Active and participatory community involvement is an important part of the cleanup process. It is also regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as "Superfund." This CIP follows community involvement requirements in the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) §117 and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) §300.430. EPA's Community Involvement Program is designed to facilitate participation of community members throughout the cleanup process, including the investigation phase and the remedy selection phase. EPA works closely with state and local agencies to provide community involvement throughout the Superfund process.

## Site Overview

The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site is located in Bristol County, Massachusetts. The 18,000-acre Site extends from the shallow northern reaches of the Acushnet River estuary, south through the commercial harbor of the City of New Bedford (CNB) and Towns of Acushnet and Fairhaven, and into 17,000 adjacent acres of Buzzards Bay. In addition, the Outer Harbor portion of the Site is bordered by the Town of Dartmouth.

EPA identified sediment and seafood contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in and around New Bedford Harbor in the mid-1970s and began site-specific investigations in 1983 and 1984. Historically, the Site was contaminated with high concentrations of many hazardous substances, notably very high levels of PCBs and heavy metals, with contaminant levels generally decreasing from north to south. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Commonwealth) designated the New Bedford Harbor Site as its highest cleanup priority site, and EPA placed it on the CERCLA National Priorities List (NPL) on September 8, 1983.

### Upper Harbor

The Upper Harbor comprises approximately 187 acres. Prior to the removal of the most contaminated hot spot sediments in 1994 and 1995 as part of EPA's first cleanup phase, sediment PCB levels were reported higher than 100,000 parts per million ("ppm") in the Upper Harbor. Now, after EPA completed the subtidal and intertidal cleanup in the Upper Harbor, much of the subtidal sediment in the Upper Harbor has PCBs at levels less than 10 ppm. For shoreline intertidal areas, EPA selected cleanup levels to reduce risk from human contact with contaminated sediment: 1 ppm PCBs for areas bordering residential areas; 25 ppm PCBs for shoreline areas bordering recreational areas; and 50 ppm PCBs for other shoreline areas with minimal public access and remote salt marshes. The boundary between the Upper and Lower Harbor is the Coggeshall Street bridge where the width of the harbor narrows to approximately 100 feet.

### Lower Harbor

The Lower Harbor comprises approximately 750 acres, and it includes a State Designated Port Area with commercial fisheries and marine industries along the shoreline, particularly on the New Bedford shore. Prior to EPA's cleanup of the Lower Harbor, completed in 2024, sediment PCB levels were reported up to 100 ppm PCBs in the Lower Harbor. Now, after EPA completed the cleanup of the Lower Harbor and after the Commonwealth oversaw the dredging of an additional one million cubic yards of less contaminated sediment as part of a State Enhanced Remedy, much of the subtidal sediment in Lower Harbor has PCB levels less than 10 ppm. For the Lower Harbor, EPA applied the same intertidal cleanup levels as described above. The boundary between the Lower and Outer Harbor is the New Bedford hurricane barrier.

### Outer Harbor

The Outer Harbor comprises roughly 17,000 acres, and sediment PCB levels are generally low. Historically, there were localized areas of PCBs in the 50-100 ppm range near the Cornell-Dubilier plant. Post-cleanups, the Outer Harbor sediment averages less than 1 ppm PCBs. EPA's long-term monitoring has shown decreasing PCB sediment concentrations over time in the Outer Harbor.

### Seafood Consumption

In and around the Site are three fishing closure areas, promulgated by the Commonwealth in 1979 due to the historic PCB-contamination in the Harbor, extending approximately 6.8 miles north to south and encompassing roughly 18,000 acres in total. Area I includes the Upper and Lower Harbor portions of the Site while Areas II and III comprise the Outer Harbor portion of the Site. In addition to State restrictions, EPA has issued specific consumption recommendations as part its cleanup plan for the Site (see Page 15). Note that the EPA's seafood consumption recommendations do not apply to seafood caught beyond the boundaries of the Site, such as the seafood caught by the New Bedford area commercial fishing fleet or local recreational fisherman.

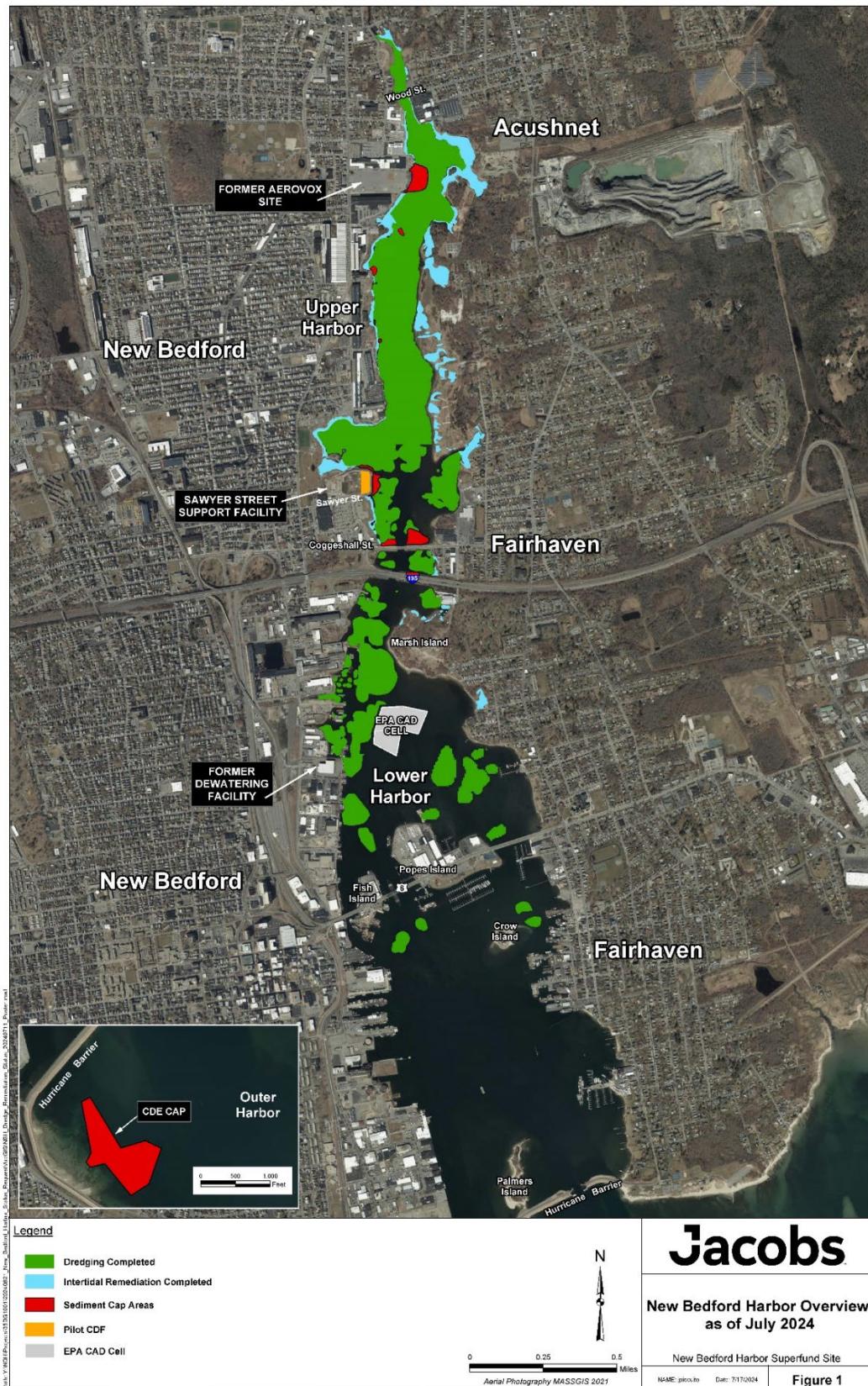


Figure 1: Overview of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site

# About the Community

EPA acknowledges that members of all four municipalities that lie within the Site use the harbor, and EPA continues to engage all four municipalities as part of the community involvement activities developed for this Site. EPA chose to focus on New Bedford to describe the community profile for this section of the CIP because it is the largest of the four municipalities and contains the most public access areas to the harbor.

The community is home to over 100,000 people living in tens of thousands of households. The population is diverse, with about half identifying as white, followed by a significant Hispanic and Latino presence. Smaller groups include Black and Asian.

New Bedford is home to a large fishing port that is used by commercial and recreational fisherman, travelers, and families. Groups such as the Buzzards Bay Coalition and Hands Across the River Coalition educate the community about the local environment and advocate for a cleaner harbor.



## Our Partners

EPA's government and community partners include:

### **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)**

- MassDEP is EPA's partner in the cleanup of the harbor, including monitoring the fish and shellfish populations for PCBs within the Site.

### **Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MADPH) & Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MADMF)**

- EPA coordinates with MADPH and MADMF in their effort to reduce seafood consumption of fish and shellfish located in the harbor. MADPH and MADMF regulations on fishing and consuming seafood from the harbor help support the EPA's seafood consumption recommendations.

### **City of New Bedford (CNB), Towns of Acushnet, Fairhaven, and Dartmouth**

- These municipalities support the cleanup by coordinating with EPA on cleanup issues that impact their communities. As an example, CNB and Town of Fairhaven have enacted local wetlands regulations to protect remediated areas along the harbor.

### **Old Bedford Village & Hands Across the River Association**

- Old Bedford Village, led by Buddy Andrade, and Hands Across the River Association, led by Karen Vilandry, are key local partners for relaying site-related information to the community.

### **Community Economic Development Center (CEDC)**

- The CEDC is a local organization EPA and CNB partner with to implement a seafood consumption survey program as a part of monitoring the community's awareness of the EPA's seafood consumption recommendations for the Site. They hire local, bi or trilingual coordinators to gather information from the community about their fishing and seafood consumption habits.

### **Buzzards Bay Coalition**

- EPA has coordinated for the cleanup and restoration of Coalition property on the east shore of the Harbor, including the Riverside Auto Junkyard. EPA also shares site-related information with the Coalition.

## **Key Contacts**

<i>EPA Contacts</i>	
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Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Paul Craffey Environmental Protection Project Manager 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02114 617-645-8738 <a href="mailto:paul.craffey@mass.gov">paul.craffey@mass.gov</a>	City of New Bedford Michele Paul Director of Resilience and Environmental Stewardship 133 William Street, Rm 304 New Bedford, MA 02740 508-991-6188 <a href="mailto:michele.paul@newbedford-ma.gov">michele.paul@newbedford-ma.gov</a>

## **Elected Officials**

For more information on elected officials, please visit <https://elections.mytimetovote.com>.

- U.S. House of Representatives. Visit [www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative) for contact information for your current congressional representative. The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site is in the 9<sup>th</sup> congressional district.

- U.S. Senate. Visit [www.senate.gov/senators](http://www.senate.gov/senators) for contact information for your current U.S. senators for Massachusetts.
- State House/Assembly. Visit [www.malegislature.gov/Legislators/Members/House](http://www.malegislature.gov/Legislators/Members/House) for contact information for your current Massachusetts representative. The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site is in the 11<sup>th</sup> Bristol district. Fairhaven is located in the 10th Bristol district; Acushnet is located in the 8th Bristol district; and, Dartmouth is located in the 9th Bristol district.
- State Senate. Visit [www.malegislature.gov/Legislators/Members/Senate](http://www.malegislature.gov/Legislators/Members/Senate) for contact information for your current senator. The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site is in the second Bristol and Plymouth district.

## Overview of the CIP Process

This CIP was created using feedback received from state, local, and community partners. These interactions took place during public meetings, interviews, and informal interactions. EPA encourages additional information from external stakeholders to better serve the community throughout Site's cleanup process. EPA held a 21-day public comment period from October 7, 2025, to October 25, 2025, before finalizing the CIP.

## Community Issues and Concerns

Feedback from state, local, and community partners included various concerns about the Site and ideas for future outreach and redevelopment.

### **Seafood Consumption**

The community expressed concerns about the historical consumption of local seafood before risks were known and how this impacts public health. Furthermore, the community expressed the need for more education and outreach about seafood consumption regulations and recommendations as people continue to consume fish from the harbor. Outreach suggestions included more signage at popular public access points, specifically on private roads.

### **Cleanup**

The community expressed concerns about the responsibility of maintaining a Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) cell, which is a facility created as a component of the Harbor cleanup to dispose of less-contaminated sediments, located in the Lower Harbor, in perpetuity and if it could impact the health of the harbor. There was also concern about additional CAD cells constructed to hold even less-contaminated navigational sediments, developed by the Port of New Bedford. One community member expressed concerns about the shoreline work that had to be redone, residual contamination and the potential outflux of PCBs from the CAD cell, and the overall pace of the cleanup.

### **Water Quality**

The community expressed concerns about the overall water quality of Acushnet River and New Bedford Harbor. One person wondered if EPA CAD cell and other CAD cells, developed by the Port to hold less-contaminated navigational sediments, could impact water quality if not properly maintained. Unrelated to the Site work, one community member expressed concerns about other contaminated properties, deterioration of the piers and docks along the waterfront, and the construction of the new US-6 Route bridge impacting water quality.

### **Outreach and Education**

The community expressed concerns about the future of consuming seafood from the Harbor and how that impacts New Bedford's long-standing reputation of being one of the largest fishing ports in the United States. One community member feels there should be more national media attention on the Site focused on the community not being able to consume local seafood without risk.

### **Reuse and Redevelopment**

Following EPA's demobilization of its former 5-acre sediment dewatering facility off Hervey Tichon Avenue, New Bedford, the facility, which includes a large warehouse-type building, marine bulkhead and rail connection, was turned over to CNB for redevelopment.

EPA is expected to demobilize from its former 8-acre Sawyer Street, New Bedford, operations area by 2025. The area included a former desanding facility, project management offices and a capped waste disposal area. Upon completion of the demobilization, the area will be returned to CNB for potential reuse. The community provided many ideas for reuse including a river walk, recreational area, public access, dock space, parking, sports complex, community boating facility, or cultural community center. Any reuse of this area where wastes have been capped in place will need to adhere to protective land-use controls (institutional controls (IC)) for the property. The cap and land-use controls eliminate risk of people being exposed to contamination through dermal contact. In addition, any plans for work conducted in the intertidal remediation areas or near the Site's sediment caps must follow the local municipalities' wetlands permitting processes to ensure these areas are not disturbed.

The City of New Bedford expressed concern that EPA's sediment caps could impede development and specifically could preclude the construction of boating facilities. EPA will continue to coordinate with MassDEP and other stakeholders, including the City of New Bedford, on IC scope and implementation.

EPA recognizes the tremendous post-remedial economic, natural resource, and development potential of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site, including boating activity in the Upper Harbor and recreational activities along the shoreline. EPA is committed to work collaboratively with the City of New Bedford, its property owners, and current and future stakeholders to ensure that short-term and long-term redevelopment occur in a manner that remains consistent with the protectiveness of the Superfund remedy and the appropriate conservation of existing and restored shoreline and other natural resources.

### **Communication Preferences**

The community expressed a wide range of ideas for communication about the Site. It included using all types of media from physical mailings to social media. Preferred media included local news and papers, national news and papers, public radio and television, government websites, and social media. The most common local news source mentioned during interviews was the New Bedford Light.

Multiple community members expressed the importance of public meetings (in person, hybrid, virtual), partnering with local groups, and meeting people at highly visited locations such as coffee shops or science meet-ups. Most asked for information when something substantive happened at the Site or on an as-needed basis.

### **Translations**

EPA translates community involvement related documents, such as fact sheets, to Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, and Vietnamese. One community member asked for documents in Haitian Creole as well.

### **Meetings**

Meetings were an important topic for community members during interviews. The best time suggested for interviews was during the evening on weekdays. Some suggested in person locations including the Fort Taber Community Center, New Bedford Whaling Museum, City Hall, and the science café hosted at a local restaurant.

The biggest roadblock to hosting meetings downtown are choosing locations with plentiful, free parking. Community members suggested meetings annually or as-needed basis. A popular style of meeting was a classroom style with question and answer at the end.

Community members also suggested that EPA should attend local events including the Cape Verdean recognition week and Cape Verdean parade.

### **Outreach and Education**

The community suggested outreach at milestone achievements or when important data is released, such as monitoring reports, changes in PCB concentrations, and the volume of PCB-contaminated sediment removed from the harbor.

Once community member suggested EPA work with commercial fishing and offshore wind groups to increase outreach and take a community-based approach to involvement.

## Additional Information

The community expressed the need for continuous communication with the public about topics such as water quality and PCB contamination in fish.

## Positives

Although many concerns and issues were discussed, the community felt the cleanup was successful. One community member noticed more wildlife in the harbor since EPA performed the cleanup. The majority mentioned positive interactions with all levels of government and felt the cleanup was respectful of private property.

## Contaminants of Concern

PCBs and heavy metals are contaminants of concern (COC) at the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site. COCs are chemicals that need to be addressed by a cleanup action because they pose a potential threat to human health or the environment. PCBs are the primary risk driver at the Site, and EPA developed site-specific cleanup levels for PCBs; however, EPA recognized that other contaminants, especially metals, contribute to sediment toxicity and factored this information into the remedial action decision making process. The dredging-based remedy removed or sequestered the highest levels of metals that were co-located with the highest levels of PCBs.

Cleanup of contaminated sediment in the harbor and the intertidal areas was completed in 2024. EPA addressed approximately one million cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment as part of the Harbor remediation, and under the Commonwealth's oversight, an additional one million cubic yards of less contaminated sediment was dredged under the State Enhanced Remedy navigational dredging. A description of remedial work performed to date can be found in the most recent [Five-Year Review](#)

[report](#) for the Site. EPA and its partners will continue to monitor the fish and shellfish population for PCBs until they reach an acceptable level for human consumption. Reducing or eliminating the consumption of PCB-contaminated seafood is the best way to mitigate threats to human health. In addition, institutional controls established around the harbor will prevent human contact with sediments left in place that do not meet the residential PCB cleanup level of 1 part per million (ppm).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a series of summaries about contaminants called ToxFAQs. You can find ToxFAQs on PCBs and heavy metals at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs). For more information on contaminants at Superfund sites, please visit: [www.epa.gov/superfund/contaminants-superfund-sites](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/contaminants-superfund-sites).



## Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

PCBs were domestically manufactured from 1929 until 1979. They were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications because they are non-flammable and chemically stable, have a high boiling point and electrical insulating properties. More information regarding PCBs may be found in ATSDR's PCBs ToxFAQs (listed as "polychlorinated biphenyls") at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs).

# THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN

## Introduction to the Action Plan

EPA used information from the 2015 Community Involvement and Institutional Control Plan for Seafood Consumption and interviews with community members in 2025 to develop this Action Plan. This plan will address the community's needs, concerns, questions and expectations as well as the community's communication styles and preferences.

## Community Involvement Objectives

EPA is seeking to:

- Inform the community of site-related activities
- Leverage our community partners to share information related to EPA's seafood consumption recommendations
- Identify community events where EPA can share information and learn from the community
- Continue to provide site-related information by using translation services and partnering with local groups

## Ongoing Communication

EPA will continue to work with the Old Bedford Village, Hands Across the River Association, Community Economic Development Center, Buzzards Bay Coalition, other community groups and community members to ensure that any important updates or information regarding the Site are shared directly with the public.

To sign up for the site email list, please contact [shaheen.aaron@epa.gov](mailto:shaheen.aaron@epa.gov).

## Community Involvement Tools and Activities

EPA has identified and developed a variety of tools and activities to better engage with and involve the community.

### Web Page

EPA will continue to maintain a web page specifically for the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site. For past, current and future updates on the Site, please visit: [www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor](http://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor).

The web page will:

- Provide an overview and history of the Site and EPA's involvement.
- Post updated information about the Superfund cleanup process to the public.
- Share site-related reports and documents with the public as they become available.
- Provide links to additional site-related resources.

EPA also has other web pages available for information about the Superfund program and Region 1:

- National Superfund program: [www.epa.gov/superfund](http://www.epa.gov/superfund)
- EPA Region 1: [www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-1-new-england](http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-1-new-england)
- Superfund Community Involvement: [www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement)

### Community Meetings

Based on availability, EPA staff may attend meetings held by community groups, the local municipalities and other organizations upon request to share information about the Site and to address community questions, concerns, ideas and comments. To identify appropriate opportunities and venues to deliver information about the Site, EPA may work with the community to coordinate the meetings.

## **EPA-hosted Events**

EPA staff may host meetings, workshops and/or open houses to share information with the community. Meetings will be held at a central location that is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible and accessible by public transportation, such as the Fort Taber Community Center and New Bedford Whaling Museum. Interviewees indicated an overall preference for evening meetings during the weekdays.

## **Virtual Meetings**

EPA continues to hold virtual, annual update meetings to review the past and future work. These meetings are held via Microsoft Teams and participants are able to access by phone for those unable to join the web-based meeting. The agency may post meeting materials to the EPA's New Bedford Harbor website for participants who are unable to view the presentation. Timing of these meetings will be reviewed as remediation activities end and activities shift to post-cleanup monitoring and maintenance.

## **Briefings with Local Officials**

EPA holds periodic coordination meetings with MassDEP and CNB to review site activities and upcoming objectives. Agency staff may brief other local government officials upon their request for information or in correspondence with relevant Site information.

## **Educational Materials**

To help address community concerns about the Site, EPA created educational materials for local schools, including the New Bedford public school's Sea Lab and Buzzards Bay Coalition to teach children about responsible use of the Harbor and seafood consumption recommendations. The agency continues to develop educational materials about seafood consumption advisories and recommendations for PCB contaminated fish/shellfish in New Bedford Harbor. The community expressed the need for more signage about seafood consumption regulations and recommendations for sign placement, including on private roads that the public uses to access the harbor, and to continue including information with local shellfish licenses.

## **Periodic Updates**

EPA staff will develop and distribute information about the Site on an as-needed basis. These will:

- Provide regular updates about the Superfund process.
- Provide updates about EPA's seafood consumption recommendations.
- Notify the public about public meetings and availability sessions and public comment periods.
- Provide links to publicly available documents and other resources.
- Update signage, as needed.

EPA staff will maintain and continue to build a site mailing list. If you would like to be on EPA's mailing list to receive site updates via regular mail or electronically, please contact EPA's community involvement coordinator. Updates will also be available at the Site's information repositories.

## **Formal Public Comment Periods**

During the Superfund process, EPA announces and opens public comment periods and encourages people to submit information. EPA accepts formal comments on several types of documents, including Proposed Plans, as well as when EPA proposes a site for listing on or deletion from the NPL. EPA considers all public comments in the Superfund decision-making process.

## Public Comment Tips

Commenting is an important way to make your voice heard. Public comments on EPA proposed cleanup actions can strengthen environmental decisions by providing the authoring agency with facts or perspectives lacking in the original proposal. EPA also accepts comments on post-cleanup actions such as Five-Year Review reports. A Five-Year Review report reviews the protectiveness and effectiveness of an environmental decision over the past five years. It can also incorporate new information regarding emerging contaminants or the need for additional investigation. Commenting helps EPA create an accurate and comprehensive document to support appropriate and informed decision-making.

- Prepare for commenting by familiarizing yourself with the scope of the issue and relevant laws.
- Identify your key issues and concerns.
- Identify allies who can help with document review and understanding technical reports and coordinate your comments with them to strengthen your message.
- Be specific with your comments, including what you think could improve the document, what you think is missing from the document, what you like about the document, and what parts you want to remain in the document.

## Translations

EPA may provide written information about the Site in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Cape Verdean Creole. The agency may translate written information about the Site in additional languages upon request. They may also provide language interpretation services at meetings upon request. Please give the agency adequate notice to prepare these resources for an upcoming meeting.

## Local Media Outlets

EPA has provided updates and shared information to local news media outlets, such as the New Bedford Light, to report on site-related issues. EPA staff may be available for interviews and try to respond to media inquiries in a timely fashion. Inquiries from the news media should be directed to the EPA Press Office.

EPA may publish public notices about meetings and other events in local newspapers and send notices to other local media outlets. EPA may include the following media outlets as part of outreach and information delivery efforts.

	<p>Newspaper/Online News Source</p> <p>New Bedford Light <a href="http://www.newbedfordlight.org/">www.newbedfordlight.org/</a></p> <p>South Coast Today/Standard Times <a href="http://www.southcoasttoday.com/">www.southcoasttoday.com/</a></p> <p>Fairhaven Neighborhood News <a href="http://www.fairhavenneighborhoodnews.com/">www.fairhavenneighborhoodnews.com/</a></p> <p>Dartmouth Weekly <a href="http://www.dartmouth.theweektoday.com/">www.dartmouth.theweektoday.com/</a></p>
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Television stations
New Bedford Local Access
<a href="http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/">www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/</a>

## Mailing List

EPA will continue to maintain and update the site mailing list. The list has been developed based on meeting sign-in sheets, community interviews, and email and telephone inquiries. To be added to the mailing list, please send a request by email, telephone or regular mail to the EPA Community Involvement Coordinator.

## Social Media

EPA may share site updates through Facebook, Twitter and other social media:

- EPA Region 1 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/@EPARegion1/](http://www.facebook.com/@EPARegion1/)
- EPA Region 1 Twitter: [www.x.com/EPARegion1](http://www.x.com/EPARegion1)
- EPA site web page: [www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor](http://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor)
- EPA Region 1 Instagram: [www.instagram.com/epa\\_newengland/](http://www.instagram.com/epa_newengland/)



## Information Repository

EPA may keep site project information and reference materials for the public to read at the local information repository. The location of the repository is below.

New Bedford Free Public Library  
613 Pleasant Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Reference Dept.  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
508-991-6280  
[www.newbedford-ma.gov/library/](http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/library/)

Information is primarily provided electronically, but hard copies are available for the repository upon request. Some of the materials available online include:

- Record of Decision (ROD)
- Proposed Plans
- Community Involvement Plan
- Site fact sheets

Many of these documents are also available through the site web page: [www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor](http://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor).

## Fish Advisories

Since 1979, Massachusetts regulations have prohibited eating fish and/or shellfish caught in certain areas of New Bedford Harbor. MassDEP samples local fish and shellfish every year to determine whether PCB concentrations are declining as a result of cleanup activities around New Bedford Harbor.

EPA recommends that recreational fishermen, shell fishermen and the public follow the Massachusetts regulations. In addition, we recommend limited eating of certain species not covered by the 1979 state regulations.

EPA has issued advisories that recommend that people limit or avoid eating certain species of fish and shellfish caught in certain places. EPA will continue to issue seafood consumption advisories for the general public and for specific groups of people at risk. EPA works with MassDEP, MADPH, and MADMF to issue advisories/develop outreach materials about the advisories.

- For MADPH fish consumption advisories, please visit: [www.mass.gov/lists/fish-consumption-advisories](http://www.mass.gov/lists/fish-consumption-advisories)
- For EPA's seafood consumption recommendations, please visit: [www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor/fish-consumption-regulations-and-recommendations](http://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor/fish-consumption-regulations-and-recommendations)



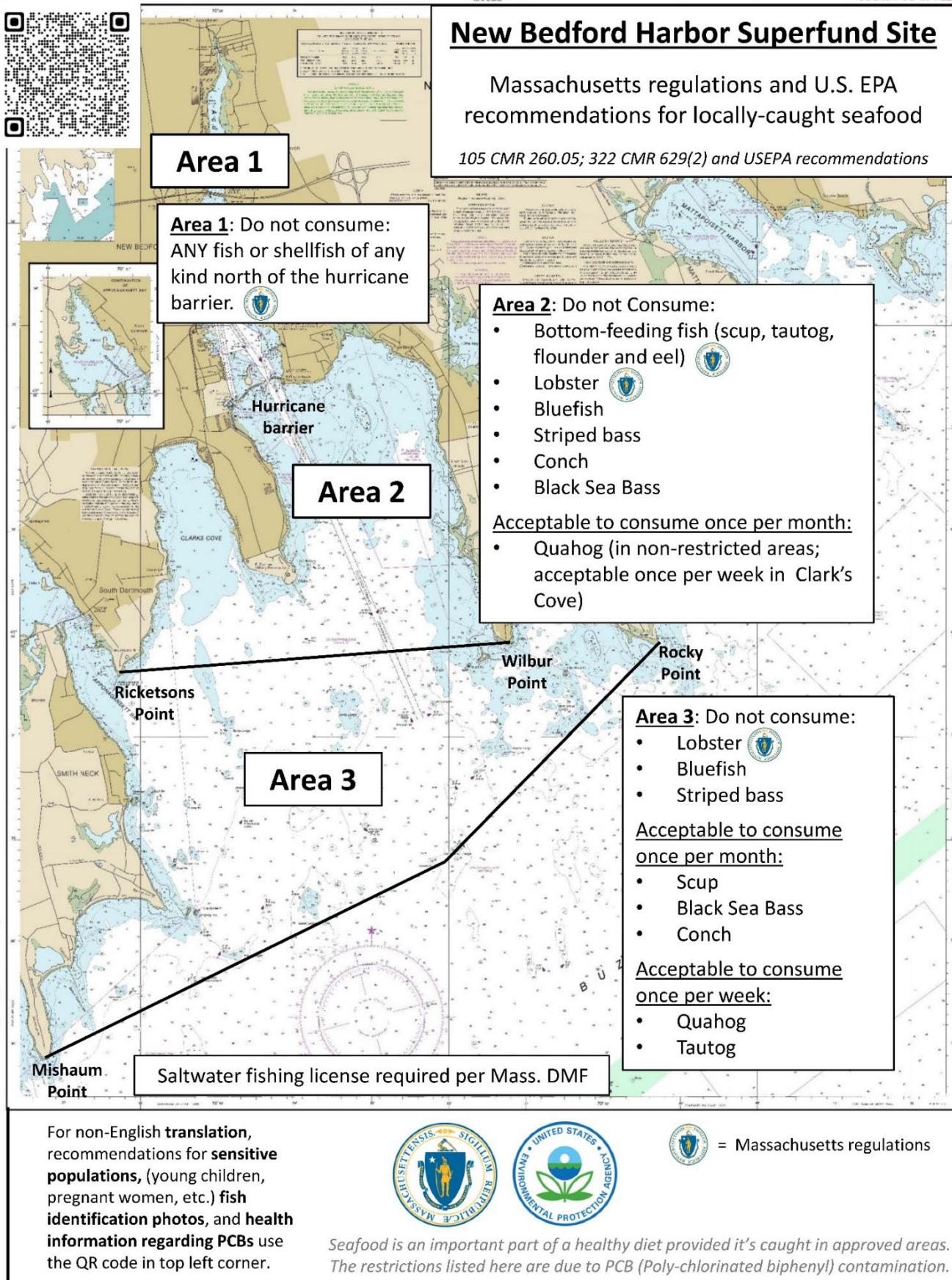


Figure 2: EPA seafood advisory signage

## TOOLS FOR SHARING INFORMATION

		
<b>Educational Materials</b>	<b>Information Repository</b>	<b>Email</b>
<p>Fact Sheets: EPA has created fact sheets that discuss site-related activities, the 1979 MA seafood consumption regulations and EPA's seafood consumptions recommendations.</p> <p>Signage: EPA posts signage displaying the 1979 MA seafood consumption regulations and EPA's seafood consumptions recommendations at popular fishing locations around the harbor.</p> <p>EPA updated its signage in 2024 and sent the 2024 seafood consumption recommendations to the abutting municipalities and site mailing list.</p> <p>Frequency of educational materials are created on an as-needed basis and by request from the community.</p>	<p>New Bedford Free Public Library 613 Pleasant Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Reference Dept. New Bedford, MA 02740 508-991-6280 <a href="http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/library/">www.newbedford-ma.gov/library/</a></p>	<p>EPA continues to maintain a mailing list for the Site. The agency shares information such as fact sheets and upcoming meeting information.</p>
		
<b>Web Page</b>	<b>Social Media</b>	<b>Local Media Outlets</b>
<p>EPA maintains a website for the Site: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor">www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor</a></p>	<p>The community maintains multiple social media accounts across most platforms. Popular social media platforms mentioned in interviews included LinkedIn, Youtube, and Facebook.</p>	<p>EPA utilizes local outlets such as the New Bedford Light, Dartmouth Weekly, Fairhaven Neighborhood News, and the Standard Times to advise the community about public meetings.</p>
<p>Updates are made on an as-needed basis when new documents or site related information is available.</p>	<p>Interviewees asked for information when something substantive happens or relevant data is released such as monitoring reports and changes in PCB concentrations.</p>	<p>Local outlets are used to disseminate site-related information when appropriate.</p>

## TOOLS FOR EPA TO LEARN FROM THE COMMUNITY

				
<b>EPA Presentations</b>	<b>Public Comment Periods</b>	<b>Community Meetings</b>	<b>Virtual Meetings</b>	
EPA uses presentations at public meetings to inform the public of site activities. These presentations are shared on the New Bedford Harbor Superfund website for the public to view.	EPA uses public comment periods for decision documents such as a Record of Decision or Explanation of Significant Differences. <b>Formal public meetings are required only for a proposed cleanup plan, or a proposed amendment to a cleanup plan.</b> At a minimum, EPA will hold formal public meetings to satisfy this requirement.	Other styles of meetings may also be utilized during milestones, such as poster sessions or open houses, where EPA personnel would be available to present information and answer questions in a more informal, small group atmosphere. This may encourage more residents to participate. Interviewees suggested all types of meetings including in-person, hybrid, and virtual.	EPA utilizes virtual meetings for its annual update meetings. These meetings are usually held on Microsoft Teams and participants can access by phone and view meeting materials through the New Bedford Harbor Superfund website.	
EPA creates a presentation for its annual update meeting.	These public comment periods are held on an as-needed basis to consider public input on EPA decisions.	Community members suggested meetings annually or when something substantive happens.	These meetings occur on an annual basis to update the community on the past year of activities and a look ahead to the next year.	

# APPENDICES

## Site Technical Overview

Operable Unit	Year	Activity
2	1990	<a href="#">Record of Decision</a>
	1992	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences</a>
	1997	<a href="#">Amended Record of Decision</a>
1	1998	<a href="#">Record of Decision</a>
	2001	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 1</a>
	2002	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 2</a>
	2010	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 3</a>
	2011	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 4</a>
	2015	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 5</a>
	2017	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 6</a>
	2025	<a href="#">Explanation of Significant Differences 7</a>

\* Additional and future technical documents are available on the New Bedford Harbor Superfund website.

### Operable Unit 2

#### 1990 Record of Decision

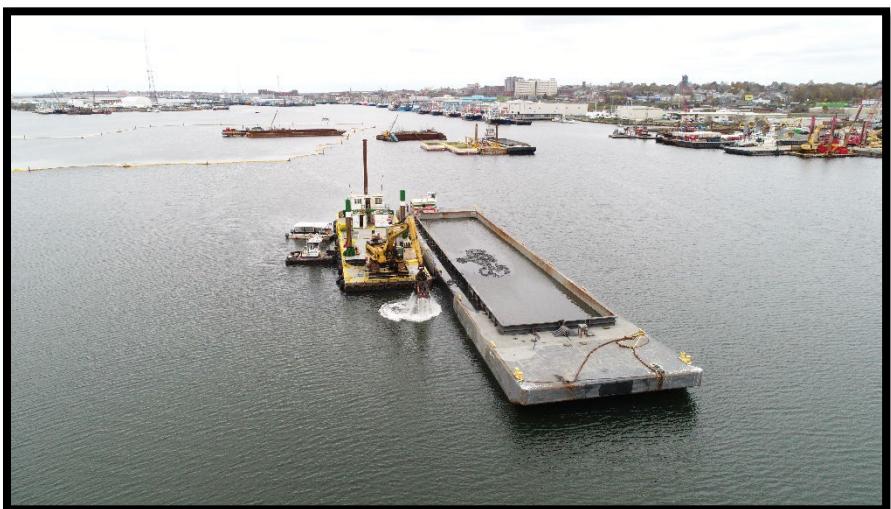
On April 6, 1990, EPA selected a remedy for the Hot Spot Operable Unit (or Operable Unit 2 or OU2), documented in a Record of Decision (ROD) which was later modified. The OU2 Remedy, as modified, called for dredging of approximately 14,000 cubic yards (cy) of sediment contaminated with over 4,000 ppm PCBs in a roughly 5-acre area in the Upper Harbor, followed by dewatering and off-site disposal at an appropriately licensed disposal facility. EPA completed this work in May 2000.

### Operable Unit 1

#### 1998 Record of Decision

EPA documented the selected remedy for the Upper and Lower Harbor Operable Unit of the Site (Operable Unit 1 or OU1) in a Record of Decision (OU1 ROD or the 1998 ROD) signed on September 25, 1998. Since that time, EPA has gathered additional site information and refined the cleanup approach for the Upper and Lower Harbor areas through seven prior ESDs, described below.

The cleanup plan selected in the OU1 ROD called for dredging of sediment in the Upper Harbor and Lower Harbor contaminated with PCBs above the selected cleanup levels. The OU1 ROD called for the construction of four shoreline Confined Disposal Facilities or "CDFs"



(A, B, C, and D) to contain and isolate the dredged sediment, associated water treatment, capping of the CDFs, long-term monitoring and maintenance, and land-use controls, also referred to as institutional controls.

The CDFs were to be sited in PCB-contaminated areas to avoid the need to dredge an additional approximately 126,000 cy of contaminated sediment, which instead would have been contained within the footprints of the CDFs. The OU1 ROD also included the remediation of two localized areas of PCB-contaminated sediment that exceeded OU1 cleanup standards, located in the Outer Harbor just south of the Hurricane Barrier.

**The seven ESDs modified the OU1 remedy to address evolving conditions, as summarized below:**

**ESD1 (2001):**

- Incorporated mechanical dewatering of dredged sediment (including construction of desanding and sediment dewatering facilities);
- Authorized construction of a rail spur to the dewatering facility;
- Revised the dike design at CDF D;
- Documented the creation and continuous use of a pilot CDF at EPA's Sawyer Street facility (Sawyer Street Pilot CDF);
- Identified additional intertidal cleanup locations in residential zones; and
- Refined the total volume of *in-situ* (in place) PCB-contaminated sediment to be addressed (approximately 800,000 cy).

**ESD2 (2002)**

- Eliminated CDF D; and
- Modified the sediment disposal destination from CDF D to off-site disposal.

**ESD3 (2010)**

- Documented the temporary storage of highly contaminated PCB and volatile organic compound (VOC) sediment (dredged near the Aerovox facility) in the former hot spot sediment disposal cell 1 at EPA's Sawyer Street facility.

**ESD4 (2011)**

- Modified the remedy to include the construction and use of a CAD cell in the Lower Harbor (the Lower Harbor CAD Cell or LHCC) for the disposal of approximately 300,000 cy of less-contaminated dredged sediment (generally under 100 ppm PCBs); and
- Refined the total volume of *in-situ* PCB-contaminated sediment above the 1998 OU1 ROD cleanup levels (approximately 900,000 cy).

**ESD5 (2015)**

- Eliminated CDFs A, B and C in the Upper Harbor;
- Modified the sediment disposal destination from CDF A, B and C to off-site disposal; and
- Confirmed the pilot shoreline CDF at the Sawyer Street facility is protective and designated the location as a permanent disposal facility regulated under the Toxic Substance Control Act, 15 U.S.C. §2601 *et seq.* (TSCA).

**ESD6 (2017)**

- Modified the OU1 remedy to expand the OU1 area to include the OU3 area and eliminate the designation of "OU3".

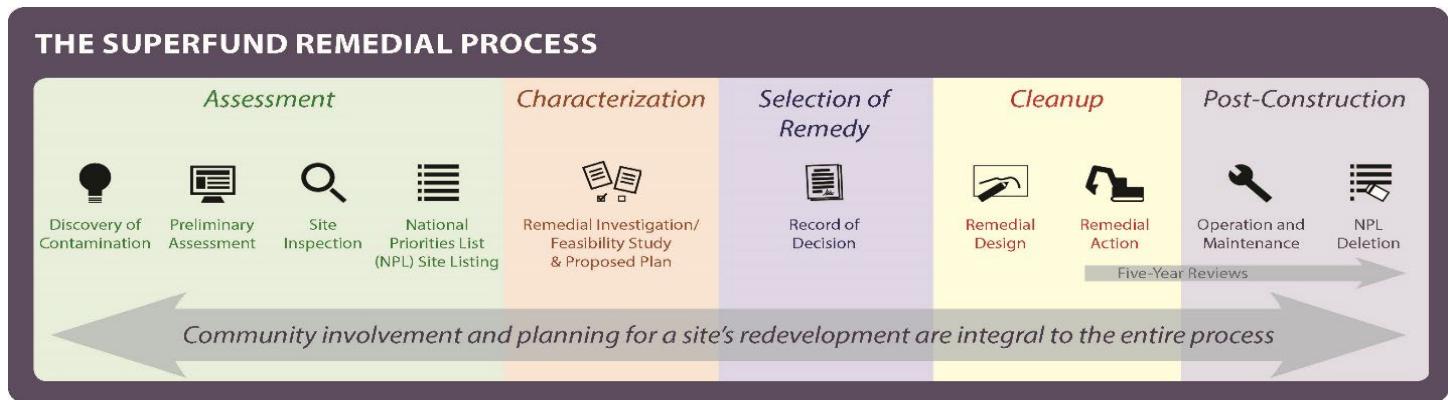
**ESD7 (2025)**

- Incorporated ten interim sediment caps as permanent elements of the OU1 Remedy, with requirements for long term monitoring, maintenance, and implementation of ICs to protect the capped areas;

- Documented an intertidal cleanup level change along the shoreline adjacent to the proposed New Bedford River Walk; and
- Clarified Institutional Control requirements to prevent human contact risk from contaminated sediments. The existing forms of institutional controls for the Site include: seafood advisories, signage, and educational campaigns; designating a regulated navigational area in the Outer Harbor; and coordination and notification through municipal wetland permitting applications. Other forms of institutional controls available to EPA include potential coordination with the State's Chapter 91 Office to provide EPA notice of proposed State permit applications for work in the intertidal and subtidal zones; deed notices; or other land use controls. Additional Institutional Controls measures to prevent human contact exposure risks may be established, if determined to be practicable.

## Superfund Remedial Process

After Superfund sites are discovered or identified, EPA uses two basic types of responses to manage polluted sites: removal actions and remedial actions. Removal actions handle emergency oil spills, chemical releases and short-term responses. Emergency actions eliminate immediate risks and ensure public safety. Remedial actions handle complex sites needing long-term responses. Remedial actions manage releases that do not pose an urgent threat to public health or the environment and do not require immediate action. Remedial actions involve complex and highly contaminated sites that often require several years to study the problem, develop a permanent solution and clean up the hazardous waste. These are the sites that most people think of when they hear about the Superfund program. The section below describes the general steps in EPA's Superfund remedial process.



### Assessment

EPA determines if a site poses a threat to people and the environment and whether hazards need to be addressed immediately or if additional site information will be collected. EPA uses the information collected during the assessment phase of the Superfund process to score sites according to the danger they may pose to human health and the environment. If a site has a high enough score on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS) and meets all other criteria, EPA may propose it for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL).

### Characterization

Once a site is on the NPL, further investigation into the problems at the site and the best way to address them is required. This is called the remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS). After development of cleanup alternatives, EPA recommends the option it considers best for the site and offers it to the community for evaluation and comment in a Proposed Plan.

### Selection of Remedy

The cleanup method ultimately chosen for the site, and the reasons for the selection, are set forth in the Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD discusses all activities prior to the selection of a cleanup method and describes how the cleanup method will be protective of human health and the environment.

## Cleanup

The cleanup phase includes two parts. During the remedial design phase, plans for the cleanup method are carefully designed. The remedial action starts the actual cleanup at a site.

## Post-Construction

After EPA determines that the physical construction at a site is complete, post-construction activities ensure that the cleanup actions will protect human health and the environment over the long term. These activities may include routine maintenance at a site such as making sure signs and fences are intact or soil treatment systems are running smoothly. EPA may delete a site or portion of a site (sometimes called an operable unit) from the NPL if all cleanup goals have been met and no further cleanup action is required to protect human health and the environment.

## Community Technical Assistance Resources

EPA provides additional assistance to communities through a variety of technical assistance resources. These resources include the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program, the Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program and Community Advisory Group (CAG) formation support. For more information on these resources, please visit: [www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-technical-assistance-communities](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-technical-assistance-communities).

	TAG	TASC	CAG Formation Support
<b>Overview of Program/Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awards grants to eligible community groups affected by the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) sites and proposed NPL sites to contract with independent technical advisors to provide the services listed below.</li><li>• Community groups must be able to manage a grant, be an incorporated non-profit and provide a 20% match, which can include in-kind services.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides technical information assistance services through a national EPA contract. Services are provided at no cost to communities.</li><li>• Suitable for communities with short- and long-term needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CAGs provide a forum for community discussion of site-related issues and are made up of representatives of diverse community perspectives.</li><li>• EPA can help with CAG formation.</li></ul>
<b>Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and explanations of site technical documents and information.</li><li>• Comments on technical documents.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and explanations of site technical documents and information.</li><li>• Comments on technical documents.</li><li>• Community trainings and workshops.</li><li>• Educational presentations.</li><li>• Technical assistance needs assessments.</li><li>• Facilitation of community meetings.</li><li>• Technical advisor services during community meetings.</li><li>• Outreach and educational materials for communities.</li><li>• Assistance understanding the environmental decision-making process.</li><li>• Language translations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informational meeting about CAGs.</li><li>• Assistance in determining CAG size and membership.</li><li>• Training for CAG members.</li><li>• Administrative support and translation and meeting facilitation services.</li></ul>

# Institutional Control Plan

## Introduction

The presence of PCB-contaminated seafood in New Bedford Harbor was first identified by EPA in the mid-1970s. In 1979, MassDPH promulgated regulations prohibiting fishing and shellfishing throughout the Site. Since 1982, signs warning the public of the presence of PCBs in the Harbor have been in place, and maintenance and replacement of these continue as needed.

EPA supplements engineering controls with administrative and legal controls called institutional controls (ICs) which help minimize the potential for human exposure to contamination and/or protect the integrity of the cleanup. ICs are used when contamination is first discovered, when cleanups are ongoing and when residual contamination remains on site at a level that does not allow for unlimited use and unrestricted exposure after cleanup.

The existing forms of ICs for the Site include: seafood advisories, signage, and educational campaigns; and coordination and notification through municipal wetland permitting applications. Other forms of ICs available to EPA include potential coordination with the State's Chapter 91 Office to provide EPA notice of proposed State permit applications for work in the intertidal and subtidal zones; deed notices; or other land use controls. Additional ICs measures to prevent human contact exposure risks may be established, if determined to be practicable. ICs may also be required in areas that were inaccessible during the dredging and intertidal excavation period, (*i.e.*, underneath shoreline rip rap), if it is determined that contamination remains in place exceeding the remedy's cleanup standards at a later date.

While some progress has been made, information obtained from surveys obtained by CEDC through an EPA grant awarded to CNB from 2016-2025 show people are continuing to eat fish caught in the Harbor. Some are choosing to do so even though they have been informed about the associated health risks; others are doing so with no knowledge or understanding of the risks presented.

## Action Plan

Below are the steps that EPA are taking to minimize the ingestion of local PCB-contaminated seafood as required by the 1998 ROD.

- Signage and Kiosks: Existing signs are written in English and online versions are available in Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Cape Verdean Creole.
- Seafood Advisories: EPA's seafood advisories are based on site-specific risk information and are reviewed as part of the Site's Five-Year Review. Advisories will be revised when warranted based on site-specific data and risk evaluations
- Education: EPA will update and maintain its seafood advisory video and share it with the community. EPA will also look for other opportunities to educate the community PCB-contaminated seafood.
- Surveys: EPA will continue to work with CEDC to gather seafood consumption habits from people fishing at popular spots around the Harbor.

## Collaborative Actions EPA Will Take to Supplement the Action Plan

- EPA will continue to collaborate with CNB, Fairhaven, Acushnet and Dartmouth, and the Commonwealth to keep the community informed about the risks associated with eating the seafood from the Site.
- In the Fall of each school year, EPA will reach out to local schools to seek opportunities to work with students and/or teachers to educate them about the health risks associated with eating PCB-contaminated fish.
- Each Spring, EPA will seek to have the fish advisories included in the local shellfishing and state fin fishing licenses.

# Site Reuse and Redevelopment

EPA's goal is to make sure site cleanup is consistent with its likely future use. Consideration of reuse at a site can occur at any point in the Superfund cleanup process, from investigation activities to deletion from the NPL.

For example, EPA transferred a former 5-acre sediment dewatering facility, containing a warehouse-type building, marine bulkhead, and rail spur to the CNB, allowing for its redevelopment as part of the commercial port.

EPA's 8-acre Sawyer Street site originally provided sediment storage and water treatment facilities for management of the most highly contaminated PCB hotspot sediments and was later developed as a desanding facility, administrative offices, and a sediment disposal facility. Today, EPA is working on investigating the extent of potential remaining contamination at the Sawyer Street property to enable potential future mixed-use redevelopment on the western portion of the site. EPA capped the disposal facility in the eastern portion of the site, known as the Pilot Confined Disposal Facility, and this area will eventually be allowed for passive recreational uses that do not disturb the integrity of the cap. After EPA demobilizes from the property, the Pilot CDF cap will become a public park, while the riverwalk will extend around the edge of the property, along the water's edge.

EPA recognizes the tremendous post-remedial economic, natural resource, and development potential of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site, including boating activity in the Upper Harbor and recreational activities along the shoreline, and EPA is committed to work collaboratively with the City of New Bedford, its property owners, and current and future stakeholders to ensure that short-term and long-term redevelopment occur in a manner that remains consistent with the protectiveness of the Superfund remedy and the appropriate conservation of existing and restored shoreline and other natural resources.

## Community Involvement During Reuse and Redevelopment

EPA works with local governments, community organizations, businesses, residents and partners to consider the reuse of Superfund sites. Reuse planning enhances community engagement during Superfund cleanups by proactively including communities in the decision-making process.

For more information about reuse planning and technical assistance resources available for communities, visit: [www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment-initiative/community-support-superfund-sites](http://www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment-initiative/community-support-superfund-sites).

## Contact Information

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## Glossary

CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (commonly known as Superfund). This law, enacted by Congress on December 11, 1980, created the Superfund program.
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	Specifically, CERCLA (1) established prohibitions and requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites, (2) provided for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites, and (3) established a trust fund to provide for cleanup when no responsible party could be identified.
<b>Confined Aquatic Disposal Cell (CAD cell)</b>	A man-made, capped underwater containment cell.
<b>Confined Disposal Facility (CDF)</b>	An onshore facility built specifically for the disposal of dredged sediment.
<b>Contamination</b>	Introduction into water, air, and soil of microorganisms, chemicals, toxic substances, wastes, or wastewater in a concentration that makes the medium unfit for its next intended use.
<b>Explanation of Significant Differences</b>	Section 117(c) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Section 300.435(c)(2)(i) of the National Contingency Plan require that, if any remedial action is taken after adoption of a final remedial action plan, and such action differs in any significant respect from the final plan, EPA shall publish an explanation of the significant differences (ESD) and the reasons such changes were made.
<b>Information Repository</b>	An information repository is a record storage area at or near a Superfund site that contains reports, documents, and factsheets pertaining to the site.
<b>Institutional Controls</b>	Institutional controls are non-engineered instruments, such as administrative and legal controls, that help minimize the potential for human exposure to contamination and/or protect the integrity of the remedy. ICs play an important role in site remedies because they reduce exposure to contamination by limiting land or resource use and guide human behavior at a site. For instance, zoning restrictions prevent site land uses, like residential uses, that are not consistent with the level of cleanup.
<b>National Priorities List</b>	EPA's list (commonly known as the Superfund list) of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned <u>hazardous waste</u> sites, identified as candidates for <u>long-term cleanup</u> using money from the <u>Superfund trust fund</u> .
<b>Operable Unit (OU)</b>	Term for each of a number of separate activities undertaken as part of a Superfund site cleanup. EPA designates separate OUs to help manage the cleanup process.
<b>Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)</b>	PCBs belong to a broad family of man-made organic chemicals known as chlorinated hydrocarbons. PCBs were domestically manufactured from 1929 until their manufacture was banned in 1979. They have a range of toxicity and vary in consistency from thin, light-colored liquids to yellow or black waxy solids. Due to their non-flammability, chemical stability, high boiling point, and electrical insulating properties, PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including electrical, heat transfer, and hydraulic equipment; as

	plasticizers in paints, plastics, and rubber products; in pigments, dyes, and carbonless copy paper; building materials; and many other industrial applications.
<b>Record of Decision (ROD)</b>	A public document that explains which cleanup alternatives will be used to clean up a Superfund site. The ROD for sites listed on the <a href="#">National Priorities List (NPL)</a> is created from information generated during the <a href="#">Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)</a> .
<b>Remedial Action (RA)</b>	The phase in Superfund site cleanup following the <a href="#">Remedial Design (RD)</a> phase where the actual construction or implementation occurs. The RA is based on the specifications described in the <a href="#">Record of Decision (ROD)</a> .
<b>Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)</b>	Performed at the site after a site is listed on the <a href="#">National Priorities List (NPL)</a> . The RI serves as the mechanism for collecting data. The FS is the mechanism for the development, screening, and detailed evaluation of alternative remedial actions. The RI and FS are conducted concurrently; data collected in the RI influence the development of remedial alternatives in the FS, which in turn affect the data needs and scope of treatability studies and additional field investigations.
<b>Remedy</b>	The method selected to clean up a Superfund site.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the risk posed to human health and/or the environment by the actual or potential presence and/or use of specific pollutants.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>CAD</b>	Confined Aquatic Disposal	<b>MassDEP</b>	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
<b>CEDC</b>	Community Economic Development Center	<b>MADMF</b>	Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
<b>CERCLA</b>	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	<b>MADPH</b>	Massachusetts Department of Public Health
<b>CDF</b>	Confined Disposal Facility	<b>NPL</b>	National Priorities List
<b>CIP</b>	Community Involvement Plan	<b>OU</b>	Operable Unit
<b>CNB</b>	City of New Bedford	<b>PCB</b>	Polychlorinated Biphenyl
<b>COC</b>	Contaminant of Concern	<b>PPM</b>	Parts Per Million
<b>CY</b>	Cubic Yards	<b>RI/FS</b>	Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study

<b>EPA</b>	United States Environmental Protection Agency	<b>ROD</b>	Record of Decision
<b>ESD</b>	Explanation of Significant Differences	<b>TAG</b>	Technical Assistance Grant
<b>IC</b>	Institutional Control	<b>TSCA</b>	Toxic Substances Control Act
<b>LHCC</b>	Lower Harbor CAD Cell	<b>VOC</b>	Volatile Organic Compound

# **New Bedford Harbor COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

**2025**

**November**

[www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor](http://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor)

