



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION I

5 POST OFFICE SQUARE

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

To: New Bedford Harbor Site File

From: Kelsey O'Neil

Date: September 2016

Subject: 2016 Community Involvement Action Plan Status

This memo serves as a status update in an effort to ensure that outreach efforts are being met as outlined in the 2015 New Bedford Harbor Community Involvement Plan (CIP). Within the CIP, the Action Plan on page 16 and Institutional Control Plan on page 21 state EPA's objectives for engagement.

In the spring of 2015, EPA worked with the City of New Bedford and the Community Economic Development Center to hire three local, bi-lingual residents to communicate EPA's seafood consumption recommendations with the public. Many of the items noted below are improved upon with their efforts.

#### Action Plan Items

#### **Ongoing Activities**

- Update Site Website: The EPA team makes every effort to put new information on the website as soon as it becomes available. In 2016, air monitoring data, turbidity data, community updates, and CAD cell work plans have regularly been added to the website.
  - EPA received feedback that the website is difficult to navigate. EPA websites nationally are going through a transition. When EPA shares pertinent site information, a direct link to the information is shared to avoid difficulty. The EPA site team is always happy to direct the public to any information they are having trouble finding online.
- Maintain Information Repository: as new documents are produced for the site, materials are added to the information repository, available online. A repository is also located at

the New Bedford Public Library. Hard copies can be sent to those without access to the EPA website anytime.

- Update Mailing and Contacts Lists: EPA uses email to share updates on site information and opportunities for public participation. When necessary, EPA will send materials through the post to local residents. EPA CIC maintains an email list for distribution.
- Respond to questions raised by community members/stakeholders/other interested parties: EPA staff makes every effort to respond to requests that come in via email, phone and in person. This includes response to questions about specific site work, property questions, request for EPA staff at meetings, etc.
- Reach out to media outlets for placement of press releases, meeting announcements, potential interview or presentation opportunities
- Periodic public meetings and poster sessions: poster session and public meetings are scheduled as necessary and when required. EPA has not held a public meeting in the 2016 calendar year and will evaluate the need for a public meeting or poster session in the fall.
- Occasionally reach out to local organizations, such as CCT, IAC and Joseph Abboud for informal meeting and presentation opportunities: EPA has been working with the CEDC and the City of New Bedford.
  - EPA has not proactively reached out to local organizations including CCT, IAC, or Joseph Abboud as suggested. EPA will conduct this outreach as time and resources allow.

### **Events Requiring Public Notice**

- An event requiring public notice has not occurred at the New Bedford site in 2016.

### **Events Requiring Public Meetings**

- An event requiring a public meeting has not occurred at the New Bedford site in 2016.

### **Spring**

- Each Spring, EPA will inform the community about the status of Site cleanup, including information about the prior and upcoming construction season activities and what to expect in terms of noise, trucks, railcars, etc. EPA may use a variety of tools to achieve this including newsletters, press releases, poster sessions, workshops, formal public meetings and/or small community meetings.

- In March 2016, EPA produced a site update and sent out an email update to the contact list, posted the update on the EPA website, and published in the local newspapers. A similar update was sent out in July 2016.
- Every year, EPA will issue direct mailings, hand-deliver, or place notification in a local newspaper in affected areas about the recommendation to rinse with clean water after wading or allowing animals to wade into the Lower Harbor shoreline areas where exposure to contaminated sediments may occur
  - EPA did not issue a direct notification to local residents in 2016 with these recommendations.
  - EPA has been closely communicating with residents along the lower harbor shoreline areas and conducted sampling along the shoreline in 2015 and 2016. The majority of samples showed that the levels of PCBs along the shoreline area in the lower harbor in Fairhaven are not above the standard for recreational use.
  - On July 11, 2015, EPA staff attended a Fairhaven Board of Selectman's meeting to give an update on the shoreline sampling effort and respond to the board's questions regarding the sampling and remediation process.
- Every year, in collaboration with the HDC, EPA may meet with local rowing and boating communities and will distribute materials regarding safe use of the harbor.
  - EPA reached out to the HDC and local rowing and boating communities, but they did not feel it was necessary to meet again this year.

### **Summer**

- EPA will provide information to event hosts for distribution at the various community events and occasionally may attend in person, as appropriate.
  - EPA is working with the Outreach Coordinator to distribute information at various community events throughout the summer.

### **Fall**

- EPA will look for opportunities to partner with local schools, including Sea Lab, and with Buzzards Bay Coalition to teach the children about the responsible use of the Harbor.

## Institutional Control Plan

### **Ongoing Activities**

- Maintain and update resources regarding seafood consumption on the Website: In 2015, EPA made a minor change to the recommendations for consumption of Tautog from the harbor. Recommendations were changed on the website and in materials being distributed to the public.

- Maintain Information Repository\*
- Update Mailing and Contact Lists\*
- Respond to questions raised by community members/other interested parties\*
- Collaborate with City, the towns of Fairhaven, Acushnet and Dartmouth, MassDEP, and MassDPH to keep community informed about risks associated with consuming contaminated seafood. Each year, EPA provides the agency's fact sheet regarding seafood consumption and restrictions on fishing to these four local communities. The fact sheet are distributed with each shellfish license that is issued for the New Bedford Harbor area.

\*These items are also noted in the action plan and are the same as in the institutional control plan.

### **Events Requiring Public Notice**

- Commencement of Five-year review: a public notice was issued for the 2015 New Bedford Harbor 2015 Five-year Review.

### **Events Requiring Public Meetings**

- No events requiring public meetings took place in the 2015 calendar year.

### **Spring**

- Each Spring, EPA will inform the community about the status of Site cleanup, including information about the prior and upcoming construction season activities and what to expect in terms of noise, trucks, railcars, etc. EPA may use a variety of tools to achieve this including newsletters, press releases, poster sessions, workshops, formal public meetings and/or small community meetings.\*
- Every year, EPA will issue direct mailings, hand-deliver, or place notification in a local newspaper in affected areas about the recommendation to rinse with clean water after wading or allowing animals to wade into the Lower Harbor shoreline areas where exposure to contaminated sediments may occur.\*
- Every year, in collaboration with the HDC, EPA will meet with and distribute materials regarding safe use of the harbor to the local rowing and boating communities.\*

### **Summer**

- EPA will provide information to event hosts for distribution at the various community events and occasionally may attend in person, as appropriate.\*

### **Fall**

- EPA will look for opportunities to partner with local schools, including Sea Lab, and with Buzzards Bay Coalition to teach the children about the responsible use of the Harbor.\*

\*These items are also noted in the action plan and are the same as in the institutional control plan.

### Spring 2015-2015 Activity Highlights

- ❖ In response to public concern about the quality and effect of EPA's "no fishing" signs, EPA designed a new sign with input from the community. In the spring of 2016, the new signs were posted in every area where signs currently existed, along with additional locations requested by the public.
- ❖ Community assistance to EPA was offered by a number of groups. EPA has connected with some of those groups, but should make an effort to connect with more. Those groups include: New Bedford Harbor Development Commission (HDC); City of New Bedford Dept. of Community Services; Town of Fairhaven Planning Dept; Sea Lab Marine Science Education Center; Community Economic Development Center (CEDC); Buzzards Bay Coalition (on their website, willing to include fish advisories and any related frequently asked questions (FAQs)); Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT); Catholic Charities; Eastern Fisheries; Joseph Abboud; Old Bedford Village; and the Immigrants Assistance Center (IAC).
- ❖ Through a cooperative agreement with the City of New Bedford, and working with the Community Economic Development Council (CEDC) in New Bedford, EPA hired local residents to conduct outreach and educate the public on EPA's seafood consumption restrictions and recommendations during summer 2015.
- ❖ Community events and festivals were suggested by several people as places for EPA to connect with residents and opportunities for providing information and answering questions. EPA attended the Working Waterfront Festival in September 2015 and plans to attend the next festival in 2017.
- ❖ Seafood Advisories: as part of EPA's Five Year Review, site specific risk information was reviewed, the advisories were amended to reflect the conclusions of the five year review. The only change was the recommendation for consumption of Tautog in Area 2, which changed from a recommendation of do not eat, to eat no more than one meal per month.

### Potential Future Outreach

- ❖ Increase outreach and engagement with: Sea Lab, Joseph Abboud, Immigrants Assistance Center (IAC), Old Bedford Village, Catholic Charities, the Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC), the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT), and Eastern Fisheries.
- ❖ Finalize and distribute video with information related to the health risks associated with consumption of PCB-contaminated seafood. EPA will seek to have this production aired on public access television and will place it on the EPA New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site website by the end of 2016.
- ❖ EPA may hold a workshop, poster session, or some other informal educational session at CCT in order to reach the “new immigrant” community, as interviewees indicated that not only are the majority of this group unaware of the presence of contaminants in the Harbor, but they have no idea that they may be exposing themselves and others to health risks associated with ingestion of local PCB-contaminated seafood.
- ❖ Whaling Museum and Buttonwood Park Zoo Emporium, to request opportunities for distribution of materials. EPA may also ask the Zoo Emporium to set up the EPA exhibit which was formerly on display at the Ocean Explorium.
- ❖ In collaboration with MassDPH, EPA will assist in raising awareness of health risks associated with consumption of PCB-contaminated seafood through participation in Grand Rounds at local hospitals when MassDPH schedules such events.
- ❖ EPA may also seek distribution points of its fish advisories in the medical community through health clinics, hospitals, doctors’ offices, and WIC centers, etc.