

NPL - 7/31/17



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CONTACT:

Emily Bender (News Media Only)
Bender.Emily@epa.gov
617-918-1037

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EPA Adds Amesbury, Mass. Superfund Site to National Priorities List to Clean Up Contamination

(Boston) — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is adding the former Microfab Inc. hazardous waste site in Amesbury, Mass. to the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL).

Superfund, which Congress established in 1980, investigates and cleans up the nation's most complex, uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites and converts them into community resources.

"Today, we are adding the former MicroFab Inc. Site to the Superfund National Priorities List to ensure it is cleaned up for the benefit of Amesbury," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, "Superfund cleanups are fundamental to EPA's mission, which is to protect human health and the environment. When we clean up these sites, we make communities healthier places to live. These cleanups also clear the way for development and increased economic activity."

The former Microfab Inc. Site is a 14-acre site at 106 Haverhill Street in Amesbury, Mass. that's contaminated with elevated levels of Volatile Organic Compounds and metals from years of industrial waste discharges. For twenty years until about 1987, Microfab Inc. used to manufacture printed circuit boards using electroplating operations. Additionally, prior to 1977, untreated wastewater that included heavy metal industrial wastes was discharged directly to an on-site wetland. The property has been abandoned for some time, and the company filed for bankruptcy in 1987. From 1991-2012, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection installed a groundwater treatment system, which is no longer operational. Since contamination still exists at the site, and the state resources for cleaning up the site have been exhausted, Massachusetts referred the former Microfab Inc. Site to EPA for listing on the National Priorities List. Now, that the site is listed, EPA can begin taking steps towards cleanup.

"The Commonwealth of Massachusetts appreciates the listing of the long abandoned Microfab property," said Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker. "Amesbury, the EPA and MassDEP have been working together for years to address the issues posed by the site because it is the best way to restore the environmental quality of the property and make it ready for future redevelopment and reuse."

"This is an important milestone in the long-term effort to remediate the contaminated Microfab site, and ultimately prepare it for reuse," said Mayor Kenneth Gray of Amesbury. "Under the local leadership of

Tom Barrasso, Director of Energy & Environmental Affairs, and thanks to the hard work and support of the EPA, MA DEP, the Baker administration, and many others, Amesbury is now one step closer to properly addressing an eyesore that has plagued our community for 30 years. We are progressing toward a solution to decades of contamination impacting Amesbury and the Merrimack River. I look forward to further collaboration as we remain focused on next steps and continued advancement through this process.”

The Superfund law directs EPA to update the NPL at least annually. Only sites added to the NPL are eligible to receive federal funding for long-term permanent cleanup.

EPA adds sites to the NPL when mismanagement of contamination threatens human health and the environment. EPA typically initiates Superfund involvement at a site because states, tribes or citizens ask for the Agency’s help. The Agency may also find contamination during its own investigations.

Superfund sites can threaten the health of entire communities. Some groups of people, such as children, pregnant women and the elderly, may be at particular risk. Superfund cleans up or isolates contamination, keeping it away from people and the environment.

Superfund cleanups benefit the health of those who live on or near Superfund sites. Academic research has shown these cleanups reduce birth defects close to a site by as much as 25 percent.

When EPA cleans up a site or a portion of a site, the site is available for beneficial uses. More than 850 Superfund sites nationwide have some type of actual or planned reuse underway.

Cleanups increase tax revenue and create jobs during and after cleanup. EPA reviewed 458 Superfund sites supporting use or reuse activities. The Agency found at the end of fiscal year 2016 that these sites had approximately 4,700 businesses with 131,000 employees and annual sales of more than \$34 billion.

Community partnerships are critical to Superfund site cleanups. EPA’s goal is to work with community partners at every site by establishing an effective process to fully explore future uses before the cleanup remedy’s selection. This approach gives EPA the best chance of ensuring remedies are consistent with a site’s likely future use.

For Federal Register notices and supporting documents for the final and proposed sites:
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/current-npl-updates-new-proposed-npl-sites-and-new-npl-sites>

For information about Superfund and the NPL:
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund>