United States Environmental Protection Agency

OLEM/OSRTI
Washington, DC 20460

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

****Proposed Site****

May 2018

PROTECO | Peñuelas, Puerto Rico

Site Location:

The site is located in the town of Peñuelas in southern Puerto Rico.

Site History:

The site operated as a hazardous waste landfill from 1975 through 1999 and accepted a variety of wastes, which included electroplating sludge, pesticide wastes, petroleum wastes, wastewater treatment plant sludge, slurries, spent halogenated solvent wastes and pharmaceutical and manufacturing wastes from multiple sources. PROTECO conducted landfill closure activities in the 1990s, but abandoned the site in 2001 and has not conducted required maintenance or monitoring.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

The former landfill contains a vast quantity and variety of hazardous substances that were not removed from the on-site disposal areas. Groundwater on site is contaminated with Mercury, and organic based solvents including; Tetrachloroethylene (PCE), 1,1-Dichloroethylene (1,1-DCE), Trichloroethylene (TCE), Trans-1,2-Dichloroethylene (Trans-1,2-DCE), 1,1,1-Trichloroethane (1,1,1-TCA), 1,1-Dichloroethane (1,1-DCA), and 1,2-Dichloroethane (1,2-DCA).

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

Groundwater within four miles of the facility is used for private and public drinking water supply wells, which contribute almost 20% of the water supply for more than 17,000 residents, workers and students. The uncontained waste sources and contaminated groundwater at the site threaten contamination of these supply wells. Runoff from the severe erosion at the site may also be contaminating the watershed. Waste had been disposed at the facility for approximately 25 years and the owner did not implement post-closure maintenance or monitoring, which has resulted in a continuing loss of integrity in the landfill cover.

Response Activities (to date):

The EPA and PROTECO had entered into a Consent Decree in 1987 and an Amended Consent Decree in 1997, both of which PROTECO was found to be in non-compliance with the maintenance and monitoring requirements. The EPA transferred the site from the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) program to Superfund due to years of non-compliance.

Need for NPL Listing:

The water-supply wells threatened by contaminated groundwater underneath the PROTECO facility are critical components of water systems which serve more than 17,000 people. Cleanup attempts under other programs, such as RCRA, have been unsuccessful. The EPA received a letter of support for placing the site on the NPL from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.