



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Ten Tribal Nations

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EPA Announces Plans to Use Funding from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Clear Out the Superfund Backlog at Maine Superfund Site

Initial resources will accelerate cleanup for Callahan Mine

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BOSTON (Dec. 17, 2021) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a \$1 billion investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to initiate cleanup and clear the backlog of 49 previously unfunded Superfund sites across the nation including Callahan Mining Corp in Brooksville, Maine. Until this historic investment, this site was a part of a backlog of hazardous waste sites awaiting funding. Thousands of contaminated sites exist nationally due to hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or otherwise improperly managed. These sites include manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills and mining sites.

“This work is just the beginning; with more than 1 in 4 Black and Hispanic Americans living within 3 miles of a Superfund site, EPA is working to serve people that have been left behind,” **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** “Approximately 60 percent of the sites to receive funding for new cleanup projects are in historically underserved communities. Communities living near many of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned releases of contamination will finally get the protections they deserve.”

“This site has been plagued with legacy contamination that, until now, EPA has not had the funding to cleanup,” **said EPA New England Acting Regional Administrator Deb Szaro.** “Getting this site off of the backlog list and cleaned up is a very important step for Brooksville to envision potential future uses for this area.”

The \$1 billion investment is the first wave of funding from the \$3.5 billion in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help cleanup polluted Superfund sites in communities across the country. The backlog of previously unfunded sites that will now be receiving funding in New England are located in Connecticut, Maine and Vermont.

The Callahan Mining Corp Site, added to the National Priorities List (NPL) in 2002, has been awaiting funding to complete the current phase of cleanup at the site since 2019. The site, located on the northwestern side of Cape Rosier on Penobscot Bay in Brooksville, Maine, is a former copper and zinc mine that operated from 1968 to 1972. The site includes a (now submerged) 300-foot-deep open pit mine, former mine operations area, a series of waste rock piles, and a tailings impoundment. Arsenic and lead contamination are found in the site's soil and rock. Copper, lead, and zinc are present in the sediments at concentrations above levels that are acceptable for ecological receptors. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were found in the area where the former Callahan Mine operations facilities were located as well.

EPA has studied and designed groundwater and sediment cleanup options for the site, but more work to implement the cleanup still needs to be done. Past work at the site included stabilizing the tailing dam and closing the tailing impoundment. Future work at the site will focus on the sediment cleanup activities, which will include sediment excavation and dredging for the salt marsh, Goose Pond, Dyer Cove, and Goose Cove.

“From roads and bridges, to water systems and environmental cleanups, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill is making historic, overdue investments in Maine,” **said U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King**. “Long a challenge for the Brooksville community, the acidic drainage from the Callahan Mine poses a threat to the health of Hancock County residents and to the Penobscot Bay. Thanks to this major funding and the hard work of the town, we can accelerate the remediation of the Callahan Mine – keeping Maine people safe, protecting our environment, and making a significant investment in Brooksville. This is just the beginning of the investments coming from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, and we look forward to seeing continued benefits for our state.”

“This new Superfund investment to clean up the Callahan Mine Site is good news for Brooksville and Hancock County. By continuing the EPA's work with the State of Maine, this funding will help clean up the mine site and protect the community around it from polluted discharges,” **said U.S. Congressman Jared Golden**. “This project was funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which I was proud to help pass. I'm glad to see this and other projects funded by this law get underway across Maine.”

EPA is committed to carrying out this work in line with President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#) by advancing environmental justice and incorporating equity considerations into all aspects of the Superfund cleanup process. This will help ensure that historic and ongoing impacts of contamination on overburdened communities are fully considered and addressed.

EPA is finalizing cleanup plans and preparing funding mechanisms to get construction work started as soon as possible. More information about funding for backlogged sites and accelerated cleanup sites will be available in the coming weeks.

In 1980, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, known as Superfund, was passed. The novel law gave EPA the authority and funds to hold polluters accountable for cleaning up the most contaminated sites across the country. When no viable responsible party is found or cannot afford the cleanup, funds appropriated by Congress are used. A tax on chemical and petroleum industries provided funds to the Superfund Trust fund for Superfund cleanups up until 1995. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law reinstates the chemical excise taxes and invests an additional \$3.5 billion in environmental remediation at Superfund sites, making it one of the largest investments in American history to address the legacy pollution that harms the public health of communities and neighborhoods.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once-in-a-generation investment that will create millions of jobs modernizing our infrastructure, turn the climate crisis into an opportunity, and put us on a path to win the economic competition for the 21st century.

For more information and to see a list of the 49 sites to receive funding for new cleanup projects, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-sites-new-construction-projects-receive-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-funding>

For more information about EPA's Superfund program, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund>