



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Flood Resiliency Measures Prove Effective at American Cyanamid Superfund Site as EPA Reaches Settlement to Secure Next Phase of Cleanup

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NEW YORK (October 13, 2021) – Mitigation measures required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) after Hurricane Irene in 2011 proved successful at the American Cyanamid Superfund site in Bridgewater after being tested by historic flooding of the Raritan River caused by the remnants of Hurricane Ida. In addition, EPA has reached an important settlement that will ensure that the next phase of cleanup at the site can move forward.

The remnants of Hurricane Ida caused flood levels at the American Cyanamid Superfund site to reach heights that surpassed those seen even during Hurricane Irene ten years ago. Earlier planning and infrastructure improvements proved highly effective as site operations, including groundwater treatment, have been maintained and remain intact. Under EPA oversight, the release of stormwater from within the site's flood control system began on September 12, 2021. The stormwater, both on and off-site, was sampled to ensure that area water quality, including in the Raritan River, was not adversely impacted. The release of stormwater was completed by the end of September, and additional evaluations, assessments and testing will occur, as needed. No significant impacts to the site have been identified.

As further good news, EPA and the Department of Justice announced the lodging in federal court of a proposed consent decree with Wyeth Holdings LLC to perform nearly \$69 million worth of cleanup work at the site. The settlement agreement requires the cleanup of two highly toxic disposal areas at the site, in accordance with the cleanup remedy selected by EPA in September 2018.

"Our recent experience shows that proper planning and infrastructure improvements can effectively manage impacts from severe storm events," **said Acting Regional Administrator Walter Mugdan**. "Through our preparations and with the proposed settlement, EPA is one step closer to addressing a highly toxic portion of the site, providing further protection against potential adverse impacts in the future. Under Superfund, the goal is always to get those responsible for the site to conduct or pay for the cleanup, and this significant settlement being proposed would ensure that the necessary costs involved in cleaning up the toxic remnants of past industrial operations do not fall on the taxpayers."

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The announced consent decree is between the United States and Wyeth Holdings LLC, a subsidiary of Pfizer Inc. The cleanup plan for waste disposal areas 1 and 2 (also called Impoundments 1 and 2) calls for excavating and removing acid tar waste, destroying the excavated waste at an off-site facility, stabilizing any materials found to have been impacted by the acid tar waste, backfilling the excavated areas, and placing a protective cover over the entire 4-acre area. Under a previous agreement, Wyeth Holdings LLC has been doing the engineering design work needed to clean up this portion of the site since the final cleanup plan was selected in September 2018. The proposed agreement announced today would allow for actual cleanup work to proceed once the engineering design work is completed.

The American Cyanamid Superfund site has a history of industrial pollution dating back to 1915. For nearly a century, companies manufactured chemicals at the property. A number of waste disposal areas were constructed and used for waste storage and disposal throughout this time, which eventually contaminated soil and groundwater. EPA placed the site on the federal Superfund list in 1983 after hazardous chemicals were found in the impoundments, soil and groundwater. Under regulatory oversight, the property owners have already cleaned up more than 80 acres and over one million cubic yards of contaminated material, through several different actions, since 1983.

EPA issued a cleanup plan for the majority of the American Cyanamid Superfund site in 2012, which included six waste disposal areas, site soil, and all site-related contaminated groundwater. The groundwater treatment portion of that remedy has been operating since March 2019, and the design of the soil portion of that remedy is ongoing. Cleanup of the portion of the site to be addressed by the proposed settlement agreement announced today is expected to occur either before or concurrent with the remaining cleanup activities for the rest of the site.

A copy of the proposed consent decree is available at www.justice.gov/enrd/consent-decrees.

Public comments on the proposed consent decree referencing *United States v. Wyeth Holdings LLC*, D.J. Ref. No. 90-11-3-07250/3 may be submitted by email to the United States Department of Justice by October 29, 2021 at: pubcomment-ees.enrd@usdoj.gov.

For additional site background visit: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/american-cyanamid>

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