United States Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Announces Proposed Cleanup and Final Remedy

AK Steel – Zanesville Works
Zanesville, Ohio

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For more information

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https://www.epa.gov/hwcorrectiveactionsites/epa-rcra-id-ohd004281598

Beginning in 2021, AK Steel and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will implement a final remedy to address historic contaminant releases that have occurred at the Cleveland-Cliffs (formerly AK Steel) – Zanesville Works facility in Zanesville, Ohio. Petroleum hydrocarbons have been detected in groundwater on-site, and fluoride has been detected in groundwater off-site.

Background

AK Steel - Zanesville Works is a manufacturer of specialty, flat rolled and coiled steel, with processes including cold rolling, coating, pickling, annealing, and painting. The facility also manufactures electrical steel used for utilities. Under EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) section 3013, AK Steel was ordered in 2002 to investigate areas that could be sources of contamination.

In 1995, a cavity was discovered in an underground tank near a finishing line that was likely caused by an overflow of pickle liquor - a steel manufacturing byproduct considered a hazardous waste by the EPA – which resulted in elevated groundwater fluoride levels. This contamination migrated north onto the neighboring Zanesville Well Field Superfund site. Following the discovered release, investigations began with a final report submitted in 2012. In 2006, AK Steel began exploring remedial options which included bench scale studies to address the fluoride contamination.

Proposed Remedies

EPA's 3013 order did not require AK Steel to formally evaluate remedial technologies. AK Steel and EPA agreed on proposed voluntary corrective measures, which are:

- Land use and groundwater use restrictions limiting land use to industrial uses, requiring management of onsite soil, maintain existing caps, and manage potential facility vapor intrusion.
- Source recovery to reduce the volume of petroleum hyrdrocarbon free-product in groundwater beneath the facility, lowering risks of potential exposure pathways or eliminating the pathways altogether.
- If future groundwater monitoring reveals higher than anticipated concentrations of fluoride, chromium or hexavalent chromium at compliance wells, a groundwater containment contingency plan will be activated.
- Groundwater monitoring to verify that contaminant concentrations remain stable. This alternative would also ensure that identified exposure point receptors would not be at risk from any contamination that is left in place at the facility.