

Commodore Semiconductor Group

EPA Region 3

Pennsylvania

Montgomery County

Norristown

EPA ID# PAD093730174

Last Update: August

2002

7th Congressional District

Other Names: Commodore
Business Machines

Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the cleanup of the Commodore Semiconductor Group site. Construction of the groundwater extraction and treatment system began in the fall of 1999. In February 2000, pipelines and underground wiring were installed, pumps were installed at each of the extraction wells, and the treatment building was constructed. The treatment process equipment was installed in May 2000. Preliminary start-up and testing of the system began in August 2000. The system started operations in September 2000 to remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the chemical components of solvents and degreasers, from the groundwater using several filtration and evaporation techniques. The treated groundwater is discharged to the Audubon Water Company's distribution system for public water.

Site Description

The Commodore Semiconductor Group site, which is located in Norristown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania was operated as a computer chip manufacturing facility from 1970 to 1992 by Commodore Business Machines. Waste solvents were stored in an underground concrete storage tank on site until 1975, when it was taken out of service. An unlined steel tank was installed next to the concrete one in 1975. Inspections conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection indicated that both tanks have leaked. The majority of residences in the area are connected to a municipal water supply, however, a small number of individuals still have operational private wells.

Site Responsibility


Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of Federal and State governments, and parties potentially responsible for site contamination.

NPL Listing History

Our country's most serious, uncontrolled, or abandoned hazardous waste sites can be cleaned using federal money. To be eligible for federal cleanup money, a site must be put on the National Priorities List. This site was proposed to the list on January 22, 1987 and formally added to the list October 4, 1989.

Threats and Contaminants

On- and off-site groundwater is contaminated with high levels of trichloroethylene (TCE) and other VOCs from the waste solvents that leaked from the underground storage tanks. TCE was also found in on-site soils. Accidental swallowing or contact with contaminated groundwater on the site may pose health risks.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html> 

Cleanup Progress

Waterline Construction Completed

In 1981 Commodore excavated soils and pumped water from a

contaminated well, then sprayed it onto surrounding fields. The VOCs dissipated into the air. Since 1984, air strippers have been in use to remove solvents from the groundwater. Air strippers have been installed on all affected public wells through agreements between Commodore and the local water authority. Also in 1984 household carbon units were installed at residences where at least 1 part per billion of VOC was detected. Other work to be done at the site included, groundwater extraction and treatment, extension of the existing water line to affected residences, and continued maintenance of hold house carbon units. On June 29, 1993, EPA issued a unilateral order to Commodore Business Machines, and Allen-Bradley Corporation to carry out this work. Only Allen-Bradley Corporation has complied with the order. Commodore Business Machines went bankrupt.

In December 1994, EPA entered into a Prospective Purchase Agreement with GMT Microelectronics which enabled GMT to purchase the facility from Commodore Business Machine, Inc. Operations at the facility were restarted in January 1995.

Waterline Extension

The waterline extension and laterals to the residences were completed in January 1997. Transfer of the ownership of the waterline extension from Allen Bradley Corporation to Audubon Water Company was completed in December 1997. The connection of the residences and the closing of the residential wells began in January 1998.

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Contacts

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Detailed public files (Administrative Record) on EPA's actions and decisions for this site can be examined at the following locations:

Lower Providence Library

50 Parklane Drive

Eagleview, PA 19403

610-666-6640

U.S. EPA Region III

6th Docket Room

1650 Arch St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-814-3157

Please call for an appointment.