

Atlanta Environmental Management, Inc.

Newsletter



Inside this issue:

EPA to Consider Vapor Intrusion Threats in Listing of Superfund Sites	2
Atlanta Ranks in Top 25 U.S. Cities with the Most ENERGY STAR Buildings	2
Georgia EPD to Renew RCRA Permit for Union Carbide	3
Earthquake in Japan	3
About Us ...	4

EPA Proposes to Defer GHG Permitting Requirements for Industries That Use Biomass

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to defer, for three years, Clean Air Act permitting requirements for carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from bioenergy and other biogenic sources. This additional time will allow the agency to conduct a detailed examination of the science on this issue.

Seeking the advice of federal partners, states, a diverse group of expert scientists including industry and other stakeholders, as well as an independent scientific panel, will help to determine how these emissions should be treated under EPA's air permitting program. In July 2010, EPA issued a call for information, seeking public comment.

New EPA guidance is also being provided to help permitting authorities determine that using biomass as a fuel can be considered the best available control technology for CO₂ emissions from the large sources needing permits. The

guidance can be used until EPA takes final action on the deferral.

Sources covered by this proposal would include facilities that emit CO₂ from burning forest or agricultural products for energy, wastewater treatment, waste management (landfills), and fermentation processes for ethanol production. Facilities meeting the requirements under the agency's greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting program will still need to report their CO₂ emissions.

Beginning on January 2, 2011, the Clean Air Act required large plants and factories planning to make major modifications or build new facilities to obtain pre-construction permits addressing their GHG emissions. Emissions from small sources, such as farms and restaurants, are not covered by these permitting requirements.

EPA will accept comments on the proposed deferral for 45 days following publication in the Federal Register.

EPA Adds One and Proposes Five Sites in the Southeast to Superfund's National Priorities List

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has added one and proposed five new hazardous waste sites in the Southeast that pose risks to human health and the environment to the National Priorities List (NPL) of Superfund sites. Superfund is the federal program that investigates and cleans up the most complex uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites in the country.

The Wright Chemical Corporation (former fertilizer manufacturer) in Riegelwood, North Carolina, has been added to the NPL. From the 1880s through the 1960s, Acme Manufacturing Company operated a fertilizer manufacturing facility and a lead chamber sulfuric acid plant at the Wright Chemical Corporation located outside the City of Riegelwood along the banks of Livingston Creek. Acme merged with Wright Chemical Corporation in 1968 and continued operation of the acid plant. Arsenic, lead, mercury, and the pesticides dieldrin and gamma-chlordane have been detected in soil.

De-vegetation is evident downgradient from the former acid plant, due to low pH of the soils. Metals and pesticides have been detected in Livingston Creek sediments, as well as in clam and fish tissue samples.

The following five sites in the Southeast have been proposed for the NPL:

- Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp-Columbus (former pressure-treated railroad products manufacturer) in Columbus, Mississippi
- Red Panther Chemical Company (former pesticides formulation plant) in Clarksdale, Mississippi
- CTS of Asheville, Inc. (former electronics components manufacturing facility) in Asheville, North Carolina
- US Finishing/Cone Mills (former textile operation) in Greenville, South Carolina
- Alamo Contaminated Ground Water (groundwater plume) in Alamo, Tennessee

To date, there have been 1,637 sites listed on the NPL. Of these sites, 347 have been deleted, resulting in 1,290 sites currently on the NPL. With the proposal of the 5 new sites in the Southeast and 10 new sites across the country, there are 67 proposed sites awaiting final agency action: 62 in the general Superfund section and 5 in the federal facilities section. There are a total of 1,357 final and proposed sites.

With all Superfund sites, EPA tries to identify and locate the parties potentially responsible for the contamination. For the newly listed sites without viable potentially responsible parties, EPA will investigate the full extent of the contamination before starting significant cleanup at the site. Therefore it may be several years before significant cleanup funding is required for these sites.

EPA to Consider Vapor Intrusion Threats in Listing of Superfund Sites

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced January 28, 2011, that it will accept public input on whether to include vapor intrusion threats as a component for including hazardous waste sites on the National Priorities List (NPL) of Superfund sites. Superfund sites are the most polluted, complex uncontrolled or abandoned sites in the United States and are eligible for federal cleanup funding to protect the people's health.

Vapor intrusion describes the migration of volatile chemicals from contaminated groundwater or soil into the atmosphere, and it is a particular concern if vapors enter an overlying building. When hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants such as dry-cleaning solvents and industrial degreasers are spilled on the ground or otherwise migrate to the subsurface, they can move in the subsurface environment and eventually enter buildings as a gas or vapor, or even as a liquid in some cases. Vapor intrusion is a particular concern because concentrations of vapors can rise to a point where the health of residents or workers in those buildings could be at risk.

In a May 2010 report, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) concluded that, if vapor intrusion sites are not assessed and, if needed, listed on the NPL, there is the poten-

tial that contaminated sites with unacceptable human exposure will not be acted upon. GAO recommended that the EPA Administrator determine the extent to which EPA will consider vapor intrusion in listing NPL sites and how this will affect the number of NPL sites listed in the future.

EPA is accepting public feedback on specific topics related to the potential revisions to the Hazard Ranking System (HRS), which is used to evaluate sites for the NPL. The HRS is the principal mechanism that EPA uses to place sites on the NPL.

The agency will consider information gathered during the comment period, as well as input from three public listening sessions, before making a decision on whether to issue a proposed rulemaking to add a vapor intrusion component to the HRS.

EPA hosted its first public listening session at its Arlington, Virginia, office on February 24, 2011. Two additional listening sessions will be held in San Francisco, California, and in Albuquerque, New Mexico. EPA will post dates, times, and addresses for the listening sessions on its Superfund webpage:

(<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/hrsaddition.htm>)

Atlanta Ranks in Top 25 U.S. Cities with the Most ENERGY STAR Buildings

The city of Atlanta has been included among the 25 U.S. cities having the greatest number of energy-efficient buildings that earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star certification in 2010. Atlanta ranked sixth, with 201 buildings certified in 2010.

Energy Star-labeled buildings in Atlanta achieved significant reductions in their energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions. These buildings represent more than 50 million square feet and will save nearly \$39 million annually in energy costs while preventing greenhouse gas emissions equal to the emissions of nearly 38,700 homes a year. Energy Star buildings and plants are America's energy all-stars—they save more, use less, and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Los Angeles remains in first place for the third year; the District of Columbia and San Francisco hold second and third place, respectively, for the second year; Detroit and Sacramento are new to the top ten. New York City climbed five

spots to claim fifth in the rankings, and California boasts more cities on EPA's list than any other state in the country, with a total of five.

Surpassing the growth of the past several years, in 2010 more than 6,200 commercial buildings earned the Energy Star, an increase of nearly 60 percent compared to 2009. Since EPA awarded the first Energy Star to a building in 1999, more than 12,600 buildings across America have earned the Energy Star as of the end of 2010.

Commercial buildings that earn the Energy Star must perform in the top 25 percent of buildings nationwide, compared to similar buildings, and must be independently verified by a licensed professional engineer or registered architect each year. Energy Star-certified buildings use 35 percent less energy and emit 35 percent less carbon dioxide than average buildings. Fourteen types of commercial buildings can earn the Energy Star, including office buildings, K-12 schools, and retail stores.

Georgia EPD to Renew RCRA Permit for Union Carbide

The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, in accordance with the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act, O.C.G.A. 12-8-60 et seq., as amended, announces its intent to renew the hazardous waste facility permit issued to Union Carbide Corp. for post-closure care and corrective action of a closed hazardous waste landfill. The landfill is located on Harriet's Bluff Road in Woodbine, Camden County, Georgia, and is identified by EPA ID number GAD 981 235 294.

The draft permit requires Union Carbide to perform corrective action and to conduct post-closure care at the Facility. No additional disposal of hazardous wastes at the facility will be allowed under the permit renewal.

The State of Georgia received final authorization for the 1984 Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) to the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended, on September 18, 1986. Therefore, upon issuance, the permit will constitute a full RCRA permit as required by the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act and RCRA/HSWA.

The draft permit has been prepared in accordance with the Georgia Rules for Hazardous Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-11. Prior to finalizing its decision to renew the permit, Section 391-3-11-01 (which incorporates 40 CFR 124.10 by reference)

of the Rules requires EPD to provide an opportunity for public comment. Accordingly, a public comment period has been established from March 9, 2011, to April 27, 2011. During the public comment period, a copy of the draft permit and permit renewal application will be available for review during regular business hours at the following locations:

Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Land Protection Branch
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., SE
Suite 1154, East Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-0900
tel. (404) 656-7802
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Camden County Public Library
1410 Hwy. 40 East
Kingsland, Georgia 31548
tel. (912) 729-3741

EPD invites comments to be submitted in writing during the public comment period. Comments should be sent to EPD at the address above. All comments received by April 27, 2011, will be considered in making the final decision on the permit renewal.

For additional information regarding the draft permit or the public participation process, or to request a public hearing, please contact John Fonk at (404) 656-7802.

Earthquake in Japan

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has updated the magnitude of the March 11, 2011, Tohoku earthquake in northern Honshu, Japan, to 9.0 from the previous estimate of 8.9. Independently, Japanese seismologists have also updated their estimate of the earthquake's magnitude to 9.0. This magnitude places the earthquake as the fourth largest in the world since 1900 and the largest in Japan since modern instrumental recordings began 130 years ago.

USGS often updates an earthquake's magnitude following the event. Updates occur as more data become available and more time-intensive analysis is performed. There are many methods of calculating the energy release and magnitude of an earthquake. Some methods give approximate values within minutes of the earthquake, and others require more complete data sets and more extensive analysis.

The magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake on March 11, which occurred near the northeast coast of Honshu, Japan, resulted from thrust faulting on or near the subduction zone plate boundary between the Pacific and North America plates. At the latitude of this earthquake, the Pacific plate moves approximately westward with respect to the North America plate at a rate of 83 mm/yr and begins its westward descent beneath Japan at the Japan Trench. Some authors divide this region into several microplates that together define the relative motions between the larger Pacific, North America, and Eurasia plates; these include the Okhotsk and Amur microplates that are, respectively, part of North America and Eurasia.

The March 11 earthquake was preceded by a series of large foreshocks over the previous two days, beginning on March 9 with a M 7.2 event approximately 40 km from the epicenter of the March 11 earthquake and continuing with another three earthquakes greater than M 6 on the same day.

The Japan Trench subduction zone has hosted nine events of magnitude 7 or greater since 1973. The largest of these, a M 7.8 earthquake approximately 260 km to the north of the March 11 epicenter, caused 3 fatalities and almost 700 injuries in December 1994. In June of 1978, a M 7.7 earthquake 35 km to the southwest of the March 11 epicenter caused 22 fatalities and more than 400 injuries. Large offshore earthquakes have occurred in the same subduction zone in 1611, 1896, and 1933, which each produced devastating tsunami waves on the Sanriku coast of Pacific NE Japan. That coastline is particularly vulnerable to tsunami waves because it has many deep coastal embayments that amplify tsunami waves and cause great wave inundations. The M 7.6 subduction earthquake of 1896 created tsunami waves as high as 38 m and a reported death toll of 27,000. The M 8.6 earthquake of March 2, 1933, produced tsunami waves as high as 29 m on the Sanriku coast and caused more than 3,000 fatalities.

The March 11, 2011, earthquake was a unique catastrophe. It far surpassed other earthquakes in the southern Japan Trench of the 20th century, none of which attained M8. A predecessor may have occurred on July 13, 1869, when the Sendai area was swept by a large tsunami that Japanese scientists have identified from written records and a sand sheet.

The exact location and timing of future aftershocks cannot be specified. Numbers of aftershocks will continue to be highest on and near to fault-segments on which rupture occurred at the time of the main shock. The frequency of aftershocks will tend to decrease with elapsed time from the time of the main shock, but the general decrease of activity may be punctuated by episodes of higher aftershock activity. The risks of great earthquakes at locations far from northern Honshu are neither significantly higher nor significantly lower than before the March 11 main shock.

**WE HELP SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL
AND ENGINEERING PROBLEMS!
PLEASE GIVE US THE
OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH YOU.**

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ABOUT US ...

AEM is a full-service environmental firm based in the southeastern United States, which has been in business for 23 years and has project locations nationwide. AEM's mission remains providing individualized, technically competent, responsive, yet highly cost-effective environmental consulting and engineering services to our clients. AEM has many long-term clients, including industrial, governmental, and commercial, who have been clients for decades. Although company growth is an objective, it is our philosophy that growth is secondary to client service and quality. Put simply, the company's primary loyalty is to its clients, not to the growth of the company, unless growth provides for better client service. Building strong and lasting relationships with our clients is the most important thing that we can do to achieve our goals and ensure long-term stability and future success.

One quality that sets AEM apart from the competition is the personalized service, quick response, and attention given to clients—direct response to our clients' needs in a timely manner. We continuously work to improve the quality of our services to our clients.

AEM actively supports a number of charities including Doctors Without Borders, the U.S.O., Antares Orphan Foundation, the Humane Society of the United States, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Make A Wish Foundation, and A Welcome Home Animal Rescue.

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