

# News Release

EPA Region 2 - New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico,  
U.S. Virgin Islands, and Eight Federally Recognized Indian Nations

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## **EPA Issues Cleanup Plan for Superfund Site in Warren County, N.J. Public Meeting June 21**

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(New York, N.Y. – June 15, 2016) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a plan to address contaminated soil at the former American National Can facility in Washington Township as part of the ongoing cleanup of the Pohatcong Valley Groundwater Contamination Superfund site. The Pohatcong site is contaminated with trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE), which can have serious health effects.

The EPA will hold a public meeting on June 21 to explain the proposed plan and is encouraging public comments. The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington Borough Municipal building, 100 Belvidere Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882. Comments will be accepted until July 15.

“The EPA plan advances the cleanup and will help protect people’s health,” said EPA Regional Administrator Judith A. Enck. “The area beneath the former American National Can facility is a continuing source of chemical contamination that will be addressed in this part of the cleanup.”

The EPA added the Pohatcong site to the Superfund list in 1989 because of elevated levels of volatile organic contaminants including TCE and PCE in the groundwater. These contaminants, both of which can have serious health impacts including liver damage and increased risk of cancer, were detected in public supply wells, which are now treated to meet drinking water standards before the water is distributed. The site includes a contaminated groundwater plume that is approximately eight and a half miles long and approximately one and a half miles wide, nearly 9,800 acres.

Because of the size and complexity of the site, EPA divided the site into three parts. One part of the cleanup is the contaminated soil at and around the former American National Can facility in Washington Township. The EPA has determined that the primary source of TCE contamination in this area is in the soil underlying the former American National Can facility, which has a long history of industrial use under prior owners and operators, was previously owned and operated by Pechiney Plastic Packaging,

Inc. in the 1990s, and is currently owned and operated by Albéa Americas, Inc. This part of the comprehensive cleanup is the focus of this proposed plan.

For this portion of the cleanup, the EPA is proposing the continued use of an existing system that removes harmful chemicals from shallow soil beneath the industrial building at the site by extracting them in vapor form with a vacuum and then filtering the vapors through carbon filters to remove contaminants. For deeper areas of contamination, the EPA is proposing the installation of a similar system between 30 to 100 feet beneath the facility.

Throughout the cleanup, sampling, monitoring and further studies will be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the remedy. If necessary, the EPA proposes using a heating process in areas of the soil that are highly contaminated that moves harmful chemicals toward wells where the chemicals are collected and piped to the surface to be treated using other cleanup methods. Some chemicals are destroyed underground during this heating process. This portion of the proposed cleanup is estimated to cost \$7.8 million without the treatment that would heat the soil and \$12.7 million, if the soil needs to be heated.

An earlier part of the site cleanup addressed a large area of groundwater contamination located in Washington Borough. A public water supply services this area. For this part of the site, the EPA finalized a 2006 plan to pump out the contaminated groundwater and treat it using a technology that strips out the pollutants by blowing air through the contaminated water to separate out the chemicals. The resulting clean water is pumped back into the ground. The groundwater extraction, treatment and reinjection system has been built and has been operating at the site since March 2016. EPA is also performing a pump and treat remedy for a portion of the groundwater that is primarily contaminated with PCE. Natural processes are also being used to further the cleanup at the site.

Another distinct part of the site cleanup includes contaminated groundwater in Franklin and Greenwich Townships. There is no public water supply currently available in most of this area and drinking water wells that are impacted by contamination have received individual treatment systems to provide clean drinking water. For this area, the EPA is requiring the construction of water lines to provide potable water. The engineering design for this part of the project is ongoing.

The Superfund program operates on the principle that polluters should pay for the cleanups, rather than passing the costs to taxpayers. The EPA searches for parties legally responsible for the contamination at sites, and it seeks to hold those parties accountable for the costs of investigations and cleanups.

Written comments may be mailed or emailed to:  
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To view the proposed plan, visit: <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/02/395905>

For more information on the Pohatcong Valley Groundwater Contamination Superfund site, go to:  
<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/pohatcong-valley-groundwater>

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