



# Press Release

Region 2 - New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

---

## **EPA Makes Cleanup Decision Final For First Phase of Passaic River Cleanup**

Contact: David Kluesner, (212) 637-3653, [kluesner.dave@epa.gov](mailto:kluesner.dave@epa.gov)

(New York, N.Y. – January 12, 2009) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced the selection of a final cleanup plan for the first stage of a two-phased project to remove dioxin-laden sediment from the lower Passaic River. The cleanup plan, outlined in an Action Memorandum signed by EPA on January 9, 2009, involves mechanical dredging of 40,000 cubic yards of sediment with mechanical processing to dewater the sediment on land nearby. The plan implements a June 2008 agreement between EPA, Occidental Chemical Corporation and Tierra Solutions, Inc. (Tierra) under which the companies agreed to remove, in two phases, a total of 200,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the portion of the river directly in front of the Diamond Alkali Superfund site in downtown Newark. That agreement calls for 40,000 cubic yards of the most contaminated sediments to be removed, treated and disposed of at one of a handful of facilities permitted nationwide to accept such waste. The agreement also requires the companies to remove an additional 160,000 cubic yards of sediment with lower concentrations of dioxin and place them in a confined disposal facility. This second phase will have a separate cleanup proposal and will undergo its own engineering study.

EPA took public comment on the Phase 1 cleanup plan when it was proposed in November 2008, and details of the plan were discussed at a public meeting in the Ironbound section of Newark on December 2, 2008. EPA, in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), selected the final plan for the first phase of the cleanup after reviewing and considering all comments submitted by the public during the 30-day comment period, which ended on December 19, 2008.

“Getting the Passaic River cleanup started is one of the proudest accomplishments of my tenure as EPA Regional Administrator,” said EPA Regional Administrator, Alan J. Steinberg. “This monumental first step in the cleanup of the entire river establishes a momentum for a course that will not be reversed or slowed.”

Four options were considered for this first phase of cleanup. The selected option is estimated to cost approximately \$45 million. Under the plan, the most highly contaminated sediment will be removed using a mechanical dredge, which will be well-suited to handle the abundant debris in the sediment; it has a higher probability of allowing the companies to meet an ambitious schedule, and is more effective at removing material in close proximity to the existing shoreline structures, such as floodwalls and bulkheads, than the other options. EPA also decided that the sediment will be processed and dewatered using a mechanical process. The field work for Phase 1 is scheduled to start in 2010 after completion of engineering design work, and is expected to be completed within approximately nine months.

During the cleanup, sheet piling will segregate the sediment to be removed from the rest of the river so that it does not get dispersed back into it, and so that the sediment can be removed using a dredge with a mechanical bucket or scoop. The mechanical dredge, operated from a barge, will dig sediment up and place it on other barges. The barges will then move to a processing site and unload using excavators.

Transportation methods and the selection of off-site treatment and disposal facilities will be determined when the project is designed. Monitoring will be conducted before, during, and after the project. Details of this work will be defined during the design phase of the project, and will include plans for monitoring of river water quality, air, water treatment discharge, and worker and community health and safety.

The Phase 1 cleanup plan is outlined in an "Action Memorandum" available on-line at <http://www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/npl/diamondalkali> or by visiting the information repository for the removal project at:

**U.S. EPA Region 2 Superfund Records Center**

Building 205  
2890 Woodbridge Avenue  
Edison, NJ 08837-3679  
Phone: (732) 906-6980

**Newark Public Library**

NJ Reference Section  
5 Washington Street  
Newark, NJ 07101  
Phone: (201) 733-7775

For a Google Earth aerial view of the Passaic Phase 1 and Phase 2 project area go to:

<http://www.epa.gov/region02/passaicriver/phases1and2cleanupmap.kmz>

(You must have Google Earth installed on your computer to view the map.

To download Google Earth, visit <http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html>).

09--007