

TESTIMONY FOR SB0125
JANUARY 30, 2024
SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE
BY ROBERTA HUBER

What is a SUPERFUND SITE? - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines it as a hazardous waste site that poses a risk to human health and the environment. Examples include the, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Sauer Dump, and Spectron Incorporated.

In 1980, Congress enacted the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). People call it the Superfund law. It allows EPA to clean up contaminated sites. It also forces parties responsible for contamination to clean it up or reimburse the government for an EPA-led site cleanup.

A much smaller segment of superfund sites are hazardous waste sites on the National Priorities List (NPL). These sites are identified by the EPA. They are selected because they warrant further investigation into the risk such sites pose and whether cleanup of the site is warranted under the Superfund Remedial program. The sites on the NPL are the worst of the contaminated sites.

This investigation is to fully characterize the extent of the contamination. The process is slow and thorough. It could take 10 plus years. In Maryland, we have NPL sites that have been on the NPL for over 20 years.

Here are a few examples of NPL sites. Ft. Detrick, was used for dumping and crop testing. From 2001- 2004, there was an Interim Removal Action of 4 disposal pits in Area B-11. No record was kept about what was disposed of in these 4 unlined pits or any other pits on the property.

After excavation of Pit 1, the excavation process was modified.

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- Additional process changes included:
- Improvement to the air treatment system
 - Dust control,
 - Use of disinfectants,
 - Segregation of medical waste,
 - Laboratory analysis of biological pathogens,
 - Vaccination of site workers, and
 - Use of ultraviolet disinfection lamps.”

Why did these changes occur for excavating Pits 2, 3. And 4? 1

“The discovery that explosive, reactive and biological contaminants were present in Area B-11 pits necessitated changes to the excavation system in order to protect human health and the environment from potential air releases. When the word, “explosive is used it means explosions and fires. 2

Please note that experts believe this activity was not caused by munitions...

1 – Fort Detrick Interim Removal Action Area B-11 Disposal Pits, September 2004, Section 3.6.2
System Modifications

2 - Fort Detrick Interim Removal Action Area B-11 Disposal Pits, September 2004, Section 3.6.1

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Another site is the Indian Head Surface Warfare Center established in 1890. It has manufactured a variety of munitions and chemicals. Site operations created explosive, reactive and hazardous waste. Waste products were dumped into pits and landfills on the Center and were also discharged into septic systems, open ditches and storm sewers that emptied into surrounding bodies of water.

The site was added to the NPL in September 1995. Currently, there are 114 areas to be studied on the facility under the CERCLA program. 12 of those areas are currently being addressed. **3**

I urge you to protect Marylanders and pass this disclosure legislation. This legislation will have no cost to the state government, but it will ensure Maryland citizens are informed via a disclosure document that the property they plan to buy is ½ mile from an NPL site. Buyers can decide if this will impact their home purchase.

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<https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Cleanup&id=0300430#background>