

## EPA Proposes Raritan Bay Site to Superfund List

Contact: Beth Totman, (212) 637-3662, [totman.elizabeth@epa.gov](mailto:totman.elizabeth@epa.gov)

(New York, NY—Apr. 8, 2009)--In a continued effort to protect the health of people who enjoy the beaches in several New Jersey neighborhoods, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to add shoreline sections of Old Bridge Township and Sayreville to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). The listing would enable EPA to do an investigation into the extent of contamination at the Raritan Bay Slag site and to take the proper measures to address the contamination.

“High levels of lead have been found in the slag and other material used in the seawall and a jetty,” said Acting Regional Administrator George Pavlou. “Slag is a byproduct of metal smelting and usually contains the metal being refined. With the listing of this site, EPA will figure out how to safely and effectively deal with this contamination, and we will work with the affected communities to keep them informed as we get the job done.”

The Raritan Bay Slag site consists of three areas with lead-contaminated material, including slag and pieces of battery casings. Identified areas include two areas that contain contaminated slag material used to construct a seawall and a jetty along the southern shore of the Raritan Bay in Old Bridge Township and Sayreville, as well as areas of Margaret’s Creek in Old Bridge. The first location is on the Laurence Harbor seawall, which is adjacent to the Old Bridge Waterfront Park in the Laurence Harbor section of Old Bridge Township. The second section consists of the western jetty in Sayreville and extends from the Cheesequake Creek Inlet into Raritan Bay. The third area is approximately 50 acres associated with Margaret’s Creek where elevated lead levels have been found throughout the area. EPA is seeking public comment on the proposed listing of the site.

In summer 2007, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) took soil samples along the southern shoreline of the Raritan Bay adjacent to the Old Bridge Waterfront Park, which revealed the presence of high concentrations of lead. NJDEP described the waste material found in the Laurence Harbor seawall as consisting of large pieces of rust-colored slag, as well as battery casing fragments of various sizes.

As a result of these findings, NJDEP worked closely with Old Bridge officials to notify the public in writing about health concerns

stemming from the lead waste material and restricted access through signage and some fencing. Due to physical constraints, however, it was not practical to completely fence off contaminated areas and access to these areas remained a concern.

NJDEP referred the site to EPA and in September 2008, EPA took samples at the site. The samples revealed that several portions of the Laurence Harbor seawall and the western jetty of the Cheesequake Creek Inlet consist of lead-contaminated slag.

Battery casing fragments were also noted in all three areas. While sampling, EPA observed that the tidal Raritan Bay waters come in contact with the slag at the locations of the seawall and the jetty during high tide. The Raritan Bay is a fishery and a sensitive environment that has been identified under EPA's National Estuary Program. The bay is also a state-designated water body for the maintenance of aquatic life. Margaret's Creek is known to be habitat for state threatened species, and is predominantly a wetland. EPA's Removal Action Branch has already begun work by erecting public warning notices in the areas of concern, warning, in both English and Spanish, of the threat posed by the elevated lead levels. Additionally, fencing has been installed to restrict access.

With the proposal of this site to the NPL, a 60-day comment period will begin during which EPA solicits public input regarding this action. For instructions to submit comments go to <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/pubcom.htm> or contact Dennis Munhall, Region 2 NPL Coordinator at (212) 637-4343 or [munhall.dennis@epa.gov](mailto:munhall.dennis@epa.gov). Once the site is placed on the NPL, EPA will expand its investigations to further define the nature and extent of contamination.

To date, there have been 1,596 sites listed on the NPL. Of these sites, 332 have been deleted, resulting in 1,264 sites currently on the NPL. There are now 67 proposed sites awaiting final agency action. There are a total of 1,331 final and proposed sites around the country.

To find out more about the NPL Site Listing Process, visit: [http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/npl\\_hrs.htm](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/npl_hrs.htm). For a Google Earth aerial view of the Raritan Bay Slag site: [http://www.epa.gov/region2/kml/raritan\\_bay\\_slag\\_site.kmz](http://www.epa.gov/region2/kml/raritan_bay_slag_site.kmz). (Please note that 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>).