

EPA Proposes to Add Dorado, Puerto Rico Site to the Federal Superfund List Drinking Water Contaminated with Solvents ^[1]

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(New York, N.Y. – April 6, 2016) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today proposed adding the Dorado Groundwater Contamination Site in the municipality of Dorado, Puerto Rico to its Superfund National Priorities List of the country's most hazardous waste sites. Sampling at the site has found chemical contamination that is impacting wells used to supply drinking water to the local communities. Exposure to the solvents, which include tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene, can have serious health impacts including, damage to the liver and increase the risk of cancer. To protect public health some wells have been closed either temporarily or permanently due to the contamination.

"Ensuring that people have a safe source of drinking water is essential to protecting public health and is an EPA priority," said Judith Enck, EPA Regional Administrator. "By placing this site on the Superfund list, the EPA can take action to ensure that the residents of Dorado are drinking clean water and the legacy of pollution is addressed."

The Maguayo and Dorado Urbano public water systems have drinking water wells that serve approximately 67,000 people. Groundwater samples collected by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority found tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene, solvents commonly used in industrial processes, in part of the system. The EPA's investigation has not yet identified the source of groundwater contamination in the public supply wells.

After receiving a letter from the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board supporting the inclusion of the Dorado site on the Superfund, the EPA has determined that a listing offers the best course of action to protect human health and clean up the contamination. The Superfund final designation makes sites eligible for funds to conduct long-term cleanups.

The Superfund program operates on the principle that polluters should pay for the cleanups rather than passing the costs on to taxpayers. The EPA searches for parties legally responsible for contaminating a site, and holds those parties accountable for cleanup costs.

For Federal Register notices and supporting documents for these final and proposed sites, on the day of publication visit: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/current.htm> [2]

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> [3]

Comments can be submitted, identified by Docket number by one of the following methods:

Docket number (EPA-HQ-OLEM-2016-0156) for the Dorado site.

<http://www.regulations.gov> [4]: Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Email: superfund.docket@epa.gov [5]

Mail: Mail comments (no facsimiles or tapes) to Docket Coordinator, Headquarters; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; CERCLA Docket Office; (Mail Code 5305T); 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW; Washington, DC 20460

Hand Delivery or Express Mail: Send comments (no facsimiles or tapes) to Docket Coordinator, Headquarters; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; CERCLA Docket Office; 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW; EPA West, Room 3334, Washington, DC 20004. Such deliveries are only accepted during the Docket's normal hours of operation (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays).

For more information on the NPL Site listing process, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/current.htm> [6] or contact Ildefonso Acosta, Region 2 NPL Coordinator, at 212-637-4344, acosta.ildefonso@epa.gov [7]

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