EPA and ExxonMobil Settle Case for Closure of Illegal Acid Waste Impoundments

Release date: 09/29/2010

Contact Information: Dave Bary or Joe Hubbard at 214-665-2200 or r6press@epa.gov

(DALLAS – September 29, 2010) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and ExxonMobil agreed to settle a case involving over one billion gallons of illegally stored hazardous waste at the Agrifos Fertilizer site in Pasadena, Texas. ExxonMobil is the prior owner of the site and retained closure and post-closure responsibility for the site's massive waste impoundments when it sold the site to Agrifos Fertilizer in 1998. ExxonMobil was subject to Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) violations due to the illegal commingling of hazardous waste with the acidic process wastewater stored in the impoundments.

The company will spend more than $150 million to close the impoundments and dispose of the hazardous waste at the site. As part of the settlement Exxon will be responsible for post-closure care, including groundwater monitoring, from the impoundments for the next 50 years.

Agrifos Fertilizer, the property owner, purchased the 509 acre plot from ExxonMobil in 1998. The Agrifos site includes a mineral processing facility that extracts phosphorus from mineral ores to produce phosphoric acid. Exxon Mobil will conduct the majority of the clean-up work at the site and Agrifos is responsible for the remaining activities.

Mining and mineral processing facilities generate more toxic and hazardous waste than any other industrial sector, based on EPA's Toxic Release Inventory. If not properly managed, these facilities pose a high risk to human health and the environment. Since 2003, EPA has been investigating a total of 20 phosphoric acid facilities in seven states.

In a national enforcement effort, EPA has focused on compliance in the phosphoric acid industry because of the high risk of releases of acidic wastewaters at these facilities, which can cause groundwater contamination and fish kills. A 2007 incident at the Agrifos phosphoric acid facility in Houston released 50 million gallons of acidic hazardous wastewater into the Houston Ship Channel.

More about activities in EPA Region 6: http://www.epa.gov/region6

EPA audio file is available at Http://www.epa.gov/region6/6xa/podcast/sep2010.html

###

Receive our News Releases Automatically by Email

Search This Collection | Search All Collections

Get email when we issue news releases

**Recent additions**