Department of Justice and EPA Announce $29 Million Settlement for Cleanup Work at Coastal Georgia Superfund Site

The Department of Justice and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced that Honeywell International Inc. and Georgia Power Company have agreed to clean up the 760-acre saltwater marsh at the LCP Chemicals Superfund Site in Brunswick, Georgia. The settlement requires the companies to spend an estimated $28.6 million to remove and isolate contaminated sediments in the marsh and to monitor the long-term effectiveness of the work.

“We appreciate that these companies have stepped forward to remedy the contamination to which they and others have contributed,” said Assistant Attorney General John C. Cruden of the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division. “This settlement makes critical progress toward the remediation of the LCP Chemicals Superfund Site and will minimize risks to people and the environment posed by contamination in the marsh.”

“Back in the 1990s, this U.S. Attorney’s Office secured criminal convictions against six officers and employees of LCP Chemicals-Georgia Inc. who were responsible for dumping mercury and other hazardous chemicals into the waters of the United States,” said U.S. Attorney Edward J. Tarver for the Southern District of Georgia. “The combined sentences totaled over 21 years in prison. The cleanup of this Superfund Site is now in its third decade. I am pleased that Honeywell and Georgia Power have stepped forward to continue cleanup as we work towards fixing the environmental mess caused by other companies’ greed many years ago.”

“EPA is very pleased to reach a settlement ensuring funding for future cleanup costs to address the contamination of the site’s tidal marsh and creeks,” said Regional Administrator Heather McTeer Toney of EPA’s Southeast Region. “We are looking forward to ensuring that cleanup work at this site continues.”

Between 1919 and 1994, the LCP Chemicals site hosted a petroleum refinery, an electric power generation facility and various manufacturing operations, including a mercury cell chlor-alkali plant. These industrial activities led to widespread contamination of the site’s soil, groundwater, surface water and sediment with mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other hazardous substances. The site was placed on the federal Superfund list in 1996.

The cleanup work required by the settlement includes dredging and installing protective caps on portions of four tidal creeks, placing a layer of clean sediment on eleven acres of marsh and restoring areas disturbed by construction. The work is expected to reduce concentrations of mercury, PCBs, lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in the marsh’s sediments.

Additionally, capping the contaminants in place will prevent them from moving throughout the marsh and contaminating its animal life. The settling parties will also monitor the remedy’s long-term effectiveness at reducing risks to human health and the environment.

EPA and potentially responsible parties, including Honeywell International Inc. and Georgia Power Company, began response work at the site in 1994. Since then, EPA has overseen the demolition of contaminated buildings, the dredging and excavation of 13 acres of marsh and the removal of contaminated soil and waste from the site’s upland...
areas. This settlement marks an important step in the remediation of the site’s tidal marsh and creeks, which comprise one of the three areas into which the site has been divided. EPA will address the site’s groundwater and upland areas in future actions.

The cleanup is being accomplished under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, commonly known as Superfund. The Superfund law protects human health and the environment while safeguarding taxpayer dollars by holding parties that contributed to contamination responsible for cleaning it up. Since 1980, EPA’s Superfund program has managed the cleanup of the nation’s most hazardous waste sites and has responded to environmental emergencies, oil spills and natural disasters.

The public has the opportunity to submit written comments on the consent decree, which is subject to the 30-day comment period and final approval by the court. A copy of the consent decree is available at www.justice.gov/enrd/consent-decrees. The Justice Department also concurrently filed a complaint initiating the case that the consent decree resolves.