

EPA SUPERFUND UPDATE – HURRICANE HARVEY

Alcoa/Lavaca Bay

Post-Hurricane Harvey condition of soil and groundwater at Alcoa/Lavaca Bay is consistent with historical site conditions that existed before the hurricane made landfall.

On September 12, 2017, soil and groundwater samples were collected and analyzed for mercury and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) to evaluate the potential effects from Hurricane Harvey. Mercury concentrations in groundwater and soil were below the cleanup levels identified in the 2001 Record of Decision (ROD) and are consistent with sample results collected prior to Hurricane Harvey. The concentration of PAHs identified in soil were below the ROD cleanup levels. Ongoing groundwater monitoring and five-year reviews are being conducted. The site remedy is operating as intended, and the remedy is protective of human health and the environment.

The Alcoa Point Comfort Operations (PCO) facility, which covers approximately 3,500 acres, was established as an aluminum smelter in 1948. Smelting operations were shut down in 1980. Bauxite refining, which utilizes bauxite ore to produce alumina, began in 1958 and is still active today. Past operations that have been dismantled and removed including the smelter, a cryolite plant, a chlor-alkali plant, and the Witco coal tar processing plant. Facility operations contaminated soil and groundwater with hazardous chemicals. The site's long-term remedy includes extraction and treatment of mercury-contaminated groundwater and installation of caps over the former chlor-alkali plant and Witco coal tar processing plant. Cleanup activities at the site began as early as 1998 and were completed in 2007. On a yearly basis, remedial action annual effectiveness reports are submitted to EPA.

The next site evaluation will be during the Superfund Supplemental Five-Year Review which will be completed by September 2019. EPA is responsible for reviewing Superfund remedial actions at least every five years where hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants will remain on site above levels that allow for unlimited use and unrestricted exposure. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) requires that EPA report to Congress regarding these sites. A Superfund Five-Year Review Report to Congress is prepared each fiscal year.