January 28, 2015

Ms. Frances Kelley  
Director of Organizing  
Louisiana Progress Action  
935 Linden Street  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71104

Dear Ms. Kelley:

Thank you for your January 26 letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. I am responding on behalf of the EPA.

The safety of the public is and has always been the most important consideration. The EPA continues to work closely with the Louisiana National Guard and State Police, who have control of the site, to assure the safety of the public. We recognize that legal negotiations that led to the current remedy approach and to the Administrative Settlement Agreement between the Louisiana National Guard, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, EPA and Department of Army could not provide the opportunity for public comment. The 90-day extension we granted provides an opportunity to increase public involvement, to consider alternatives and to expeditiously assure materials at Camp Minden are disposed in a manner that protects public safety, health, and the environment.

While we wholeheartedly agree on finding ways to increase involvement as we move forward, the issues raised in your letter are the types of issues that should be discussed over the upcoming days as the potential for alternative options is reviewed.

We support establishing a Dialogue Committee made up of citizens, officials and external scientists as well as representatives from the EPA, LDEQ, Louisiana National Guard and the Department of Army. The Committee could be asked to review alternatives as expeditiously as possible. We also support using the nine criteria from the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan to evaluate alternatives in the remedy selection. We envision this process to involve conference calls, document reviews, and face-to-face meetings in North Louisiana. At the conclusion of the Committee’s deliberations, all the information would be shared with the public and media in a series of public meetings. This will also provide the broader public an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions.

With your support, we would like to host a planning conference call early next week to discuss members of the Dialogue Committee and a schedule for moving forward.
Again, thank you for your letter. We will continue to reiterate our support for public involvement as we work to find ways to address the dangerous conditions at Camp Minden.

Sincerely,

Ron Curry
Regional Administrator

cc:  The Honorable David Vitter
     United States Senate

     The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
     United States Senate

     The Honorable John Fleming, M.D.
     House of Representatives

     The Honorable Ralph Abraham
     House of Representatives

     The Honorable John M. McHugh
     Secretary of the Army

     The Honorable Bobby Jindal
     Governor of Louisiana

     The Honorable Tommy Davis
     Mayor of Minden

     The Honorable Ollie S. Tyler
     Mayor of Shreveport

     The Honorable Lorenz Walker
     Mayor of Bossier City

     Mr. Craig R. Schnauder
     Deputy General Counsel, Department of the Army

     Ms. Peggy Hatch
     Secretary, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

     Major General Glenn H. Curtis
     Adjutant General, Louisiana National Guard