



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TEXAS 75202 – 2733

January 26, 2015

Office of the Regional Administrator

Ms. Peggy Hatch
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Post Office Box 4301
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-4301

Dear Secretary Hatch:

The Administrator has asked me to respond to your January 16 and 22 letters to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concerning Camp Minden in Webster Parish, Louisiana. Since Explo Systems, Inc. filed bankruptcy and abandoned the materials in August 2013, the EPA, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), Louisiana National Guard and the Louisiana State Police have jointly worked to respond to the situation at Camp Minden, in a manner that moves quickly to protect the public both from the risk of further explosions and from adverse consequences in properly disposing of the material. Over the past year and a half, our organizations have secured the materials from exposure to weather conditions that sped its deterioration and ordered three other companies to remove about 3 million pounds of materials from Camp Minden for proper disposal. This work is expected to be completed by early summer.

The Army Explosive Safety Board advised that the deterioration of the remaining 15 million pounds of M6 propellant and other materials could greatly increase the risk of explosion by August 2015. EPA recognizes that the legal negotiations that led to the current remedy approach and to the Administrative Settlement Agreement between LANG, LDEQ, EPA and the Department of Army did not provide the opportunity for public comment. It is very clear that elected officials and the public want to be involved in examining alternative remedies.

On January 15, EPA granted a 90-day extension to the compliance deadlines to allow time for the consideration of other options for disposal. On January 21, EPA facilitated a conversation with the Department of Justice, LDEQ and the Louisiana National Guard to verify that an alternative remedy could be considered and the Administrative Settlement Agreement could be appropriately modified without jeopardizing the \$20 million currently available to the State.

EPA will make a technical team available to join representatives from your departments for consideration and evaluation of alternatives. I am requesting that you designate your representatives by January 30, 2015.

Through our national Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) contract, EPA will also make the services of a technical advisor available to assist the local officials and communities participate in the process to identify, evaluate and comment on possible alternatives.

We believe these measures are directly responsive to the public requests to consider alternatives and to expeditiously complete the review of alternatives to assure materials at Camp Minden can be disposed in a manner that protects public safety, health and the environment. We look forward to working with you to increase public involvement as we move forward. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

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 Robert Adley
Louisiana State Senate

The Honorable Barrow Peacock
Louisiana State Senate

The Honorable Sherri Smith Buffington
Louisiana State Senate

The Honorable Gene Reynolds
Louisiana House of Representatives

The Honorable Henry Burns
Louisiana House of Representatives

Identical letter sent to: Major General Glenn H. Curtis
Adjutant General, Louisiana National Guard