



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION III

WITHDRAWAL OF STATEMENT OF BASIS

FORMER EXIDE TECHNOLOGIES  
READING, PENNSYLVANIA  
EPA ID NO. PAD990753089

I. BACKGROUND

In May 2020, EPA issued a Statement of Basis (SB) to solicit public comment on its proposed remedy for the former Exide Technologies (Exide) facility located at 3000 Montrose Avenue, Reading, Pennsylvania (Facility). EPA's proposed remedy consisted of soil excavation and capping for onsite lead-contaminated areas, soil remediation of elevated exposure risk areas at the Gethsemane Cemetery adjacent to the Facility, sediment remediation, ongoing groundwater monitoring, and implementation of land and groundwater use restrictions.

EPA received comments on the SB from the Commissioners of the County of Berks and from State Senator Schwank's office. These comments largely focused on whether the off-Facility soil cleanup levels should be based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's blood lead reference level of 5 µg/dL for children. As explained in EPA's draft *Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities*, dated November 16, 2021, EPA is currently evaluating its soil lead policy for contaminated sites, last updated in 1998, which provides recommendations for cleaning up lead contaminated soils at CERCLA and RCRA sites. EPA plans to set new recommendations for screening sites and strengthen preliminary remediation goals to reduce lead exposure in communities and protect human health and the environment in accordance with the latest science.

Shortly after EPA issued the SB, in May 2020, Exide filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy to liquidate its North American operations. The bankruptcy settled in October 2020 and Exide dissolved. As part of the settlement, the bankruptcy court established an Environmental Response Trust (ERT) and appointed Exide Environmental Response Corporation as Trustee to oversee funds in the ERT to address remaining Exide's unsold and contaminated properties, including the Facility.

Approximately, \$500,000 of the ERT was allocated to the Facility. An additional \$2 million was set aside for the Facility from the forfeiture of a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) closure bond for the former Hazardous Waste Management Units (HWMUs) at the Facility. Those funds are insufficient to complete the investigation and cleanup of the Facility.

Currently, EPA's Superfund Removal Program is conducting a Removal Action at the Facility, including a Removal Site Evaluation, to evaluate and mitigate, as necessary, the actual or threatened release of hazardous substances at the Facility which may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, welfare, or the environment. Superfund Removal has prioritized the baghouses and associated ductwork containing high concentrations of hazardous substances; process equipment; containers, and other highly contaminated areas of the Site for removal response actions. In addition, EPA will take temporary actions required to prevent an uncontrolled release of contaminated wastewater or stormwater from the Facility by continuing to operate the existing Treatment Systems. Based on the information currently available, EPA has allocated approximately \$15 million to complete the Removal Action. In addition, the EPA Superfund Site Assessment Program is evaluating the potential for the Facility (and other areas that have come to be contaminated by hazardous substances attributable to the Facility) to be included on the Superfund National Priorities List for long term investigation and remediation.

## II. STATEMENT OF BASIS WITHDRAWAL

EPA has determined that managing the Facility under the Superfund program ensures that the cleanup actions, as necessary to protect human health and the environment, will be performed and will maintain the continuity of EPA's regulatory oversight. Therefore, EPA hereby withdraws the Statement of basis issued on May 29, 2020 for the Facility. The comments received on the SB have been shared with the Superfund Program as well as PADEP.

## III. SIGNATURE

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Dana Aunkst, Director  
Land, Chemicals, and Redevelopment Division  
U.S. EPA Region III

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Date

Attachment A: Statement of Basis, May 2020