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EPA Issues Preliminary Results from Samples Collected Jan. 15 Along Woonasquatucket

BOSTON - Based on a preliminary screening for 2,3,7,8-TCDD, the most toxic form of dioxin, 14 of 17 soil samples collected Jan. 15 from along the Woonasquatucket River had TCDD-dioxin levels below 1 part per billion, including all 10 of the soil samples collected from the Lee Romano baseball field and the North Providence Boys and Girls Club property, according to preliminary sampling results announced today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Two of the 17 soil samples had TCDD-dioxin levels above 1 part per billion. Both samples were collected from the Centredale Manor property, which was identified earlier this month as an area with elevated dioxin levels in the soil. The two samples were collected adjacent to the river in an area subject to flooding.

The last of the 17 soil samples - also collected from the Centredale property - was a duplicate sample that is being re-analyzed.

"The good news about these preliminary results is that we didn't get any high readings at the baseball field or the Boys and Girls Club, but it's important to emphasize that these results are very preliminary and could change once a full analysis of the samples is completed by early March," said EPA New England Administrator John P. DeVillars, noting that the full analysis involves an evaluation of all types of dioxin. "The results from Centredale reinforce the direction we're already headed in - that this property must continue to be a primary focus of EPA's attention. That means immediately installing additional fencing around the two sampling locations and undertaking more sampling in the coming weeks so we can better understand the scope and breadth of the contamination on this property."

DeVillars said five additional soil samples were collected yesterday from the Lee Romano baseball field. They were collected from the concession stand and batting cage areas. These two locations have not been sampled before.

EPA also performed a preliminary screening of three well-water samples, two from the Yacht Club Bottling Works Company and one from the Pied Piper Nursery School. Based on the preliminary screening, there was no evidence of dioxin in concentrations above 1 part per trillion - the detection limit of the preliminary screening method.

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A more rigorous analysis of those water samples is already underway and finalized results are expected in mid-February. The more sophisticated analysis can detect dioxin at concentrations as low as 10 parts per quadrillion. The federal drinking water standard is 30 parts per quadrillion, or .03 parts per trillion.

"The preliminary results from the drinking water samples are just that - very preliminary - and they should not be used to make any sort of determination about possible health risks," DeVillars said.

The R.I. Department of Health also collected a water sample from the Yacht Club Bottling Works Company earlier this month and finalized results are expected early next week.

WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER

EPA Sampling January 1999

