



News Release

Public Affairs Office
Pacific Ocean Division, Honolulu Engineer District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440

Contact: Doug MaKitten/
Alex Kufel
Building 230
Telephone (808) 438-9862

For Immediate Release

Corps Receives EPA Approval to Finish Tanapag PCB-contamination Project

(Honolulu, October 17) -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu Engineer District has received conditional approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to go ahead with the final phase of the Tanapag, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) Remediation Project.

The EPA decision means the Corps will treat and remove PCBs from approximately 20,000 tons of contaminated soil stockpiled in containment cells adjacent to the Tanapag Cemetery No. 2. Site preparation will begin this month and treatment of the soil is scheduled to start in January. Work at the site, including restoration, should be finished by next summer.

EPA's conditional approval was announced in a letter from Keith Takata, EPA Region 9 Superfund Division director, to Honolulu Engineer District Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management Ray Jyo. The approval followed EPA's review of the Corps' Focused Feasibility Study and Proposed Plan for Remediation of PCB-contaminated Soil and the comments received from agencies and the public on these documents. Final approval is contingent on EPA's approval of a Corps work plan for contamination at the site and performance testing of the equipment that will treat the contaminated soil.

The Corps evaluated 10 possible alternatives in the Focused Feasibility Study and recommended the combination of ITD treatment of the soil on-site, with off-site disposal of residual material, as the preferred alternative in the Proposed Plan. ITD separates the PCBs from the soil through a low temperature heating process that vaporizes the contaminants without combustion or burning. Any contaminants that remain following treatment will be transported back to the United States mainland for disposal in an approved landfill. The remaining clean soil will be enriched with nutrients and made available for use by the Tanapag community.

"We are delighted that EPA agrees with us that the indirect thermal desorption process is the best method to remove the PCBs from the stockpiled soil," said Lt. Col. Ronald Light, Honolulu Engineer District commander.

"Our goal throughout this long, challenging project has been to remove the PCBs from Tanapag and leave the community with clean soil for future use," Light continued. "The ITD process is safe, proven technology that will do that.

"I also want to thank EPA, the CNMI Department of Environmental Quality, the citizens of Tanapag and all the others who have helped us reach this point," Light added. "Your persistence and perseverance has helped us find the solution."

The final phase of the work, including the site preparation, treatment of the soil, packaging and shipment of residual PCBs and site restoration, will be done by the Corps contractor Environmental Chemical Corporation of Aiea, Hawaii. ECC is an experienced firm that has successfully used ITD to treat a much larger PCB-soil contamination project on the U.S. mainland. The estimated cost is \$6,764,120.

The Corps, EPA and the CNMI DEQ will continue to work closely together during the final phase of the project.

The Honolulu Engineer District is the lead agency for the Tanapag PCB Remediation Project as it is the Department of Defense agent for cleanup of Formerly Used Defense Sites. EPA has oversight of the cleanup under the provisions of a USEPA administrative order issued in accordance with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.