

## Rothman Gets U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers To Remove All Contaminated Soil From Maywood Superfund Site

September 29, 2003

Rothman Gets U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers To Remove All Contaminated Soil From Maywood Superfund Site Agreement Means Thorium-Tainted Soil Will Be Completely Excavated And Shipped Out Of State

Maywood, NJ - In a major victory for the quality of life and health of local residents, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today announced that he has gotten the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to agree to excavate all contaminated soil from 20 commercial sites in three municipalities and to dispose of the tainted soil out of state. Following numerous appeals from Rothman, the Army Corps, which has control over the thorium-contaminated soil, formally agreed to the complete excavation and shipment remediation option that had been strongly preferred by the Congressman and area residents. The Army Corps already excavated and shipped all of the soil from residential property in those three municipalities to a remote site in Utah. The tainted sites are collectively known as the Maywood Superfund site, although they are located in Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park.

"Getting this toxic material out of Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park will provide an enormous sense of relief to local residents and improve their quality of life now that they know these toxins will no longer be in their midst," Rothman said. "I am very pleased and grateful that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers responded to our request that this contaminated soil not be simply washed and left in our communities, but all of the polluted dirt be totally removed and shipped out of state. The complete excavation of the soil and its shipment is the most thorough and environmentally sound method that will protect the health and well-being of residents."

The Army Corps reviewed four options for dealing with contamination from the former Maywood Chemical Works plant at 20 commercial sites in Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park. The four alternatives that the Army Corps had considered for the non-residential sites were: 1) taking no action; 2) monitoring the situation and instituting barriers that would prevent any contact with the contaminated soil; 3) excavating and disposing the contaminated soil offsite (Rothman's choice, which has now been agreed to); 4) separating contaminated soil from uncontaminated soil and disposing only the tainted soil out of state (the Army Corps' former choice).

Rothman adamantly opposed the Army Corps' original proposal for remediation because soil separation is an unproven method that would have done an inadequate job of completely ridding the area of thorium-tainted soil, and thus would not have met the Congressman's or the residents' standards. In an effort to ensure that the Army Corps did the most thorough job of excavating the contaminated soil, Rothman kept in constant contact with the agency through phone calls, letters, and meetings, including with Colonel John O'Dowd who oversees the agency's New York District. During his three years on the House Appropriations Committee, Rothman has also worked to secure over \$55 million in federal funds for the cleanup of the Maywood Superfund site, with another \$25 million expected to be allocated later this year.

"By excavating and completely removing all of the soil at these 20 contaminated commercial sites as opposed to some other less efficient options, the Army Corps will ensure that there will not be unsafe soil left in Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park," Rothman said. "Having contaminated soil in one's neighborhood is not something anyone wishes for, and as a result of the Army Corps agreement it is not something the people of these three communities will have to worry about anymore. I am very pleased that I was able to get this result for the people of Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park."

From 1916-1956, Maywood Chemical Works processed monazite sand to extract thorium and rare earth minerals for use in manufacturing industrial products such as mantles for gas lanterns. During that time, a watery mixture containing waste from thorium processing operations was pumped to diked disposal ponds west of the plant. Some of the waste was removed from the plant for use as mulch and fill on nearby properties, thereby contaminating the properties with

radioactive material, which also spread to Lodi and Rochelle Park.

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