



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

May 20, 2009

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Jackson:

The Cabot Koppers Superfund site was placed on the National Priorities List in 1983. For many years, I have worked closely with the City of Gainesville, Alachua County and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to facilitate a clean-up of the site.

Recent sampling of the soils west of the active Koppers wood treating facility in the area known as the Stephen Foster Neighborhood revealed concentrations of dioxins, benzo(a)pyrene and arsenic exceeding the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's residential soil clean-up target level standards. One location's dioxin levels exceeded the EPA's residential levels.

As a result of these findings, the Alachua County Health Department sent out an advisory outlining the serious health risks associated with soil contact and ingestion, particularly to young children. The warning was distributed to the 20 homes closest to the site on May 15, 2009.

My primary and most urgent concern is the health and safety of the residents. I understand EPA has spoken with Beazer East, the primary responsible party, about immediate actions that will limit exposure. Yet days have gone by and there is no visible effort to cover, fence off, or otherwise isolate the areas where contaminants were found. I am asking EPA and Beazer East to take protective measures immediately and apprise me of what these actions entail.

While I expect the EPA to adopt the State of Florida's standard for chlorinated dioxins (2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxins) in residential areas in the agency's decision for the Koppers site, I would also like to know what levels of dioxins, arsenic, and benzo(a)pyrene would trigger a federal emergency response.

And, before works begins on sampling farther into the Stephen Foster neighborhood, I ask that EPA work with the community on a sampling plan as quickly as possible in order to determine the extent of the contamination. I also ask that sampling include the areas North, South and East of the Koppers facility. Please provide me with a time frame for these actions.

Lastly, taking protective actions for the community and sampling to determine if the contamination has spread should in no way delay or slow the pace of remedial work at the Koppers site. The community has waited for many years and additional delay is not an option.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "B" and "N".