



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Region III
841 Chestnut Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF:

Federal Facilities Branch (3HW50)

VIA TELEFACSIMILE

March 14, 1996

Department of the Navy
Northern Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
10 Industrial Highway, Mail Stop #82
Lester, PA 19113-2090

Attn: James L. Colter (Code 1821/JLC)
Remedial Project Manager

Re: Installation Restoration Program Site #10
Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base
Willow Grove, PA

Dear Mr. Colter:

On behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region III ("EPA Region III" or "Agency"), I have reviewed your March 6, 1996 correspondence regarding the referenced Installation Restoration ("IR") Program site, which is designated as the Navy Fuel Farm, at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base ("NAS/JRB"). EPA Region III received your correspondence on March 11, 1996.

This letter is intended to quickly respond to the U.S. Navy's request that IR Program Site #10 be addressed through Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection ("PADEP") regulations in lieu of the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended ("CERCLA"), and implementing regulations under the National Contingency Plan ("NCP"). EPA Region III understands that this request is based on the U.S. Navy's opinion that ground water at IR Program Site #10 "...has [only] been impacted due to past petroleum contamination."

EPA Region III certainly recognizes that petroleum product is specifically excluded from the terms "hazardous substance" and "pollutant or contaminant", which are defined in CERCLA Sections 101(14) and 101(33), respectively, as well as codified at 40 CFR Part 300.5. However, as you are aware, the Agency had previously furnished written comments, at your request, regarding two environmental reports prepared for the Navy Fuel Farm. While reviewing one of these reports, which was entitled "draft

Evaluation of Remedial Alternatives for Soil Piles", the Agency noted the possibility that soil and ground water contamination may not be attributable solely to the release of petroleum product. These comments were included as an attachment to January 6, 1994 correspondence from EPA Region III to your office. Furthermore, subsequently-issued U.S. Navy documents such as the written responses to our comments, "Pre-design Sampling and Analysis Report for Soil Piles" and "Action Memorandum for Final Disposition of Soil Piles at Navy Fuel Farm", do not contain any significant new sampling analytical data or other information that would lead us to believe contamination is limited entirely to petroleum product. We received these documents as an enclosure to November 22, 1994 correspondence from your office. If there exists additional documentation of which EPA Region III is unaware, the Agency would be most interested in receiving this information so that we could further evaluate your request.

Please be assured that EPA Region III appreciates your desire to limit oversight of investigations and cleanups at IR Program Site #10 to the appropriate regulatory authority. We also understand that a timely decision regarding applicability of CERCLA and the NCP is crucial because the U.S. Navy intends to ascertain whether, and to what extent, cleanup actions are required to address any remaining free-product. The Agency shares your concerns and further suggests that such a determination include all potentially impacted media such as ground water, surface water, sediment and soil. We believe that Federal Facility Agreement negotiations represent the most appropriate forum in which to ultimately resolve this issue.

Pending resolution of this issue, EPA Region III recommends that you continue to coordinate environmental investigations and cleanups at the Navy Fuel Farm with both the Agency and PADEP. In the meantime, I would be willing to meet with you and PADEP at your earliest convenience to further discuss applicability of CERCLA and the NCP. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (215) 597-3161. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Drew Lausch
Remedial Project Manager

cc: Hank Sokolowski (EPA)
Paul Greco (NAS/JRB)
Hal Dusen (ARS)
David Kennedy (PADEP)