

## Sediment Collapse into Detroit River from Detroit Bulk Storage Site

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### INTRODUCTION

These frequently asked questions have been compiled to answer the community's questions about the sediment collapse into the Detroit River. Our understanding is that a pile of dirt and gravel along the riverbank on property leased by Detroit Bulk Storage collapsed into the Detroit River, possibly with part of the riverbank on Tuesday, November 26, 2019.

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#### Why is this of concern?

The Detroit Bulk Storage's site was formerly used to process uranium, resulting in contamination from the uranium and other more conventional pollutants on the site.

#### What is the latest information?

Radiological testing conducted Friday, December 6 at the site of a shoreline collapse into the Detroit River confirms that radiation is below natural background levels throughout the site

Background radiation levels at the site farthest away from the river were at 4 microrentgen per hour (Ur/hr). Naturally-occurring radiation levels in Michigan are typically between 5 and 8 (Ur/hr). Testing closer to the water, including tests from inside the crevasses opened by the sediment collapse, ranged between 3 and 5 Ur/hr. More than 1,000 data points were recorded during the testing.

Although EGLE sees no indication that the collapse may have increased downstream levels of other contaminants, EGLE also took water samples from both upstream and downstream of the shoreline collapse to monitor levels of conventional pollutants like PCBs. Those results will be made available once lab analysis is complete.

#### What is this site's current status regarding contaminants?

After the uranium processing ceased, federal regulators oversaw the demolition of structures and remediation of contaminants at the site. Radiological surveys conducted in the 1980s and 1990s showed no radiation exceeding typical background levels. More soil was removed in the 1980s to remediate conventional contaminants like PCBs. EGLE oversaw additional soil removal to remediate conventional contaminants in the 1990s. In April of this year (2019) EGLE conducted river sediment sampling immediately offshore from the site as part of a routine monitoring program. Because of the history of the site, EGLE also tested for radiation. Those tests showed no radiation above background levels. The December 6, 2019 tests confirm that finding.

## When was the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lake and Energy notified?

We were made aware of the situation late in the afternoon of Wednesday, December 4, 2019, by a media inquiry.

## Who is responsible for any contamination or problems?

The property owner is not liable for the past contamination but has a “due care” responsibility to safely manage operations on the site. EGLE will be examining whether the due care responsibility was fulfilled, but our immediate priority is the protection of public health and the environment.

## What is the risk to drinking water?

The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) has two raw water intakes upstream of the site, for which there is no danger of any potential water quality issues related to the sediment collapse. It has one intake downstream of the site, but it is located outside the direct stream flow, on the Canadian side of the river. The GLWA does not believe there is a risk from that intake but is currently conducting independent testing for radionuclides as a precaution. They will share those results as soon as they are available.

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*Meaningful involvement of residents ensures an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health.*