



News for Immediate Release

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Federal Recovery Act Helping Clean Up Leaking Underground Storage Tanks; Protect Public Health, Safety

Projects Creating 80-90 Full-Time Equivalent Jobs

Warrington – The Department of Environmental Protection is using \$6.1 million in federal Recovery Act funds to help clean up 71 sites around the state where leaking underground storage tanks are threats to the environment and local economies.

DEP Secretary John Hanger today joined federal, state and local officials in Bucks County to highlight the cleanup efforts at one of the sites.

Hanger was joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Shawn Garvin at the abandoned Malcolm's Auto Repair and said removing the leaking underground tanks is an important first step to jump-starting the site cleanup and returning the property to productive use.

"It is easy to see that this property does not fit with the surrounding development," said Hanger. "All productive activity here ended years ago, but the underground petroleum storage tanks remained. Those tanks were leaking and have impacted the environment and the economy.

"While businesses flourish in the surrounding area, this site remains an eyesore and the leaking tanks serve as a tall hurdle that must be overcome before the site can flourish again."

Malcolm's is one of the sites being cleaned up with financial assistance from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In August, EPA awarded \$6.1 million to Pennsylvania to clean up sites where historic abandoned underground tanks are hindering economic development due to concerns about possible contamination and potential cleanup costs.

Currently, DEP contractors have initiated field work at 35 of the sites. Corrective actions include removing leaking and abandoned tanks and contaminated soil, as well as investigating the extent of contamination.

During the fourth quarter of 2009, the 10,300 hours worked by environmental technicians, equipment operators, drilling technicians and various environmental professionals on these projects accounted for 20 full-time equivalent jobs. It is expected that 80 to 90 full-time equivalent jobs will be funded by Recovery Act investments to clean up the 71 sites.

Plans are being made to begin work at the 36 other sites as soon as possible, depending on the weather and securing agreements with property owners.

“Few people are willing to take a risk on purchasing land in a prime location such as this when they suspect that it may be contaminated,” said Hanger. “By removing the remaining product from these tanks and getting the abandoned tanks out of the ground, not only are we ending the threat of groundwater contamination and any potential danger to public health and safety, we are clearing the way for this property to once again be useful to the community.”

To learn more about how the federal Recovery Act will benefit communities across Pennsylvania, visit www.recovery.pa.gov.

Media contact: Deborah Fries, 484-250-5808

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