



United States
Environmental Protection Agency
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NEWS

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TUTU WELL SITE ON ST. THOMAS PROPOSED FOR SUPERFUND LIST

NEW YORK -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced today that the TuTu Well Site in St. Thomas, where gasoline from underground storage tanks and other volatile organic compounds have contaminated ground water, is now the first site in the U.S. Virgin Islands to be proposed for the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). Superfund is the federal program to clean up abandoned or inactive hazardous waste sites.

As a result of the ground water contamination detected during the summer of 1987, EPA, with the help of territorial government, conducted a Superfund Emergency Removal Action in order to protect public health. The actions involved extensive ground water and cistern monitoring as well as trucking clean water to affected homes and an apartment complex.

Final listing of the Tutu Wells Site is expected after a 30-day public comment period which begins today. Final listing will make the site eligible for federal funds if responsible parties are unwilling to complete cleanup actions at the site.

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As required by a Federal Order that EPA issued in 1990, Esso Standard Oil, S.A. Limited, Texaco Caribbean Inc. and O'Henri, Inc. are working to complete the following tasks:

- * extension of a public water main constructed by the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (VIWAPA), in cooperation with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA), and hooking up the affected apartment complex and any homes with contaminated drinking water to the public water system;

- * provision of potable water to the affected population until such time as the affected apartment complex and homes are connected to the permanent water supply; and,

- * continuation of EPA's well water monitoring program at the TuTu Wells Site.

The order was issued under the authority of Superfund, the federal program to clean up hazardous waste sites and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which, among other things, regulates underground storage tanks.

EPA is currently negotiating with Esso and Texaco for the companies to undertake a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) at the site. A RI is an examination of the extent and nature of chemical contamination at a site. A FS identifies various cleanup options for a site.

Written comments on the proposed listing should be mailed to: Hazardous Site Evaluation Division, (OS-230), Attention: NPL Staff, EPA 401 M Street, Washington, D.C., 20460. Based on these comments and further review by EPA, the site could be placed on the final NPL.

For more background on the site see attached.

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