

# **CALUMET, OUTAGAMIE, WINNEBAGO COUNTIES**

**PRESS RELEASE • FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • SEPTEMBER 20, 2004**

## **THREE FOX VALLEY COUNTY BOARDS QUESTION LANDFILLING VS. VITRIFICATION OF PCB LADEN FOX RIVER DREDGINGS**

By nearly unanimous vote, the Outagamie, Calumet and Winnebago County Boards have each passed a resolution requesting the DNR to reconsider its decision to landfill the PCB laden dredgings of the Fox River and revert to the vitrification process in order to completely and forever destroy the PCBs. These three Boards represent 371,800 citizens.

The three counties have grave concerns regarding the decisions being made to move the PCB rich Fox River materials to the landfill owned by Onyx Waste Services in the town of Chilton in Calumet County. The first phase of a multiple phase plan to remove the PCBs from the Fox River has been implemented and 375,000 tons of sediment has begun to be removed from Little Lake Butte Des Morts. This first phase was originally thought to be completed in three years. However, recent accounts indicate the time to be seven years. It is thought that the seven-year time frame would permit the vitrification process to be very competitive to landfilling. The advantage to vitrifying the PCB laden materials would be the complete destruction of the PCBs.

Merlin Gentz, Calumet County Board Chairman, stated, "We need to question the wisdom of moving the PCB sediment from the Fox River to the landfill site. Why would we want to move the problem from the Fox River to the landfill? I realize that the landfill technology has advanced tremendously but, what will happen to our environment in 50 years, 100 years, as a result of this landfilling? What kind of a problem are we developing for our grandchildren and great grandchildren? Remember, the paper companies were not breaking the law when they placed the PCBs in the Fox River 30 years ago. They were abiding by DNR and EPA regulations. We just didn't know how damaging these PCBs were going to be in our environment. What's to say that down the road, we won't have a real environmental challenge with the PCB materials in our landfills."

Outagamie County Executive Toby Paltzer, indicated, "We know that the cost of removal of the sediment and landfilling in this initial phase is estimated to be around \$60 million

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dollars, with \$50 million of that coming from two paper companies and \$10 million coming from the DNR. We are asking the Governor and the DNR to provide us with the detailed cost figures regarding the removal of sediment involved in Operable Unit 1 and landfilling this sediment. We have seen the detailed cost figures, which would be experienced if the vitrification process would be used. We would like to see an open comparison of costs of landfilling versus vitrification.”

Winnebago County Executive Jane Van De Hey, stated, “This is a very sensitive environmental issue which demands our attention. We need to be sure that the solution is respectful of what future generations may have to deal with regarding this massive removal of PCB sediment. The fact that three county boards, representing 371,800 residents of the Fox Valley, have taken action to request the DNR and the Governor to reconsider vitrification of PCB materials, is evidence of the great importance placed upon this issue.”

The three county leaders will hold a press conference at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 23, 2004, at the Outagamie County Courthouse, County Board Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 410 S. Walnut Street, Appleton, to more fully discuss this issue.