



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

NOV 24 2009

The Honorable Mike Johanns
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Dear Senator Johanns:


Thank you for your letter of September 24, 2009, requesting that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) meet with the Omaha Lead Site (OLS) Community Advisory Group (CAG) to discuss its proposal to implement a comprehensive remedy as a model for addressing childhood lead poisoning at Superfund sites. In coordination with your office, EPA will arrange a meeting with the OLS CAG and other interested parties.

The final remedy selected for the OLS community commits EPA to participate in a comprehensive remedy to address all sources of lead exposure at the OLS, to the extent possible. As you point out, and our past experience in remediating residential lead sites indicates, the remediation of lead contaminated yard soil is a primary prevention activity in permanently reducing exposures that result in increased blood-lead levels in children. Health education remains a significant component of the final remedy and includes operation of two EPA public information centers in Omaha and production of public service announcements to alert residents to the existence of lead hazards in the community.

While EPA recognizes the problems faced by indoor lead contamination, the Superfund statute, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and its implementing regulation, the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), limit EPA's authority to respond to indoor contamination. However, we are able to address exterior lead stabilization activities to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the yard remediation work that is being conducted. To date, EPA and the city of Omaha have stabilized exterior lead-based paint at more than 2,000 homes and we are working with the Douglas County Health Department to develop a distribution plan for HEPA vacuum cleaners along with health education to address lead contaminated interior dust.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may call Carolyn Levine, of EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, at (202) 564-1859.

Sincerely,


Mathy Stajislaus
Assistant Administrator