



For Immediate Release

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS URGE EPA TO REMOVE RADIOACTIVE WASTES
FROM MISSOURI RIVER FLOODPLAIN**

Highly Radioactive Wastes Should Not Be Kept in Bridgeton, MO

(ST. LOUIS-MO) Great Rivers Environmental Law Center filed a Request on behalf of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment (“Coalition”) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), urging the EPA immediately to reconsider its decision to keep highly radioactive wastes in the West Lake Landfill located in Bridgeton, MO, in the floodplain of the Missouri River, and to defer any action on this site at this time.

The Mallinckrodt Chemical Works (MCW) company processed uranium ore in St. Louis from 1942-1957 for the production of nuclear weapons, and dumped radioactive residues at a tract near the airport. The residues that found their way to the West Lake Landfill consist of uranium, thorium, and, a series of other radioactive elements into which those elements decay.

In 2008, the prior administrator of the EPA decided that the wastes would be permanently stored in the floodplain of the Missouri River. In contrast, the other MCW radioactive wastes in St. Louis have been or are being excavated and transported to out-of-state facilities.

The Coalition for the Environment believes it is probable that the radioactive wastes will continue to leach into the Missouri River, which is the source of drinking water for North St. Louis County, and for most St. Louis City residents who obtain their drinking water just below the Missouri/Mississippi river confluence.

“The EPA has a duty to protect people from radioactive contamination of air and water,” said Henry Robertson, attorney for the Coalition. “These wastes should be removed from the floodplain.”

“These wastes will continue releasing radioactive particles and rays for literally billions of years,” said Kat Logan Smith, Executive Director of the Coalition. “They are currently in a floodplain that is now merely ‘protected’ by a manmade levee. As we in St. Louis well know, levees can fail. If the area floods, the radioactive wastes can be dispersed into drinking water sources, onto farmland, and into the air we breathe.”

In a letter sent today, the Coalition requests the new EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson, to reconsider the decision of the prior administrator regarding the radioactive wastes at West Lake Landfill.