

Arco Neighborhood Sampling Results Withheld by EPA

It took over eight years for the EPA to uphold its promise to sample the Arco Neighborhood next to the LCP Chemicals Superfund Site. Now that Arco soils have been sampled and analyzed, the EPA is withholding the data from review by our community's technical advisor and the toxicologist at the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

The EPA's position is that the Responsible Parties for the LCP Chemicals Site must complete a draft report with an interpretation of the results before either our technical Advisor, Dr. R. Kevin Pegg, or Dr. David Mellard, Toxicologist at ATSDR, can review the data. Dr. Pegg, our community's technical advisor under the EPA Technical Assistance Grant program is to provide an independent review and interpretation of data from the LCP Superfund Site so our community can stay involved in the decision making process. An interpretation of the Arco sampling data by those responsible for the LCP Chemicals Superfund Site mess is not needed for Dr. Pegg to review the data and report his findings. Likewise, Dr. Mellard does not need an interpretation of the data to produce a Public Health Assessment. What is needed right now is the Arco sampling data.

It is unknown why the EPA is withholding data that is crucial to the future of Arco. More disturbing are the EPA's current plans to only release the data two weeks before their public meeting sometime in the future. Two weeks is not sufficient for our technical advisor to review the data, produce a report, distribute information, and conduct a community meeting to discuss the results in preparation for the EPA's meeting. A Public Health Assessment cannot be produced by Dr. Mellard in two weeks, either.

Whatever the results from the sampling of the Arco neighborhood reveal, the EPA's withholding of data does not inspire confidence that the results are favorable or positive. If no problems were found, the EPA would be quick to let the community know. Meanwhile, the eight-year wait to resolve uncertainties about chemical contamination in the Arco neighborhood continues.

-- April 26, 2005