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Olin Agrees to Clean Up DDT in Triana, Alabama Area

[EPA press release - April 21, 1983]

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that the Olin Corporation has formally agreed to a multi-million dollar cleanup of DDT contamination around its former manufacturing facility, the Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, and to provide for health care for the residents of the nearby community of Triana.

"The agreement marks the first time an EPA enforcement action has provided for health care for an affected population," said EPA Acting Administrator Lee Verstandig.

Verstandig added, "This unique health care provision provides \$5 million to establish the Triana Area Medical Fund, Inc., which will provide primary health care and monitoring of the residents. This is a non-profit corporation whose Board of Trustees will consist of representatives of both local citizens groups and the federal government."

Many of Triana's 1000 residents have been found to have elevated levels of DDT in their blood, primarily from the consumption of DDT-contaminated fish caught in Indian Creek, which runs near the plant site. The small community is about 12 miles from the Arsenal.

EPA announced general terms of the agreement on December 30, 1982. The final agreement was lodged with the U.S. District Court in Birmingham, Alabama, April 15, 1983. A notice announcing a 30-day comment period was published in the Federal Register the same day.

DDT was manufactured at the Redstone Arsenal site from 1947 to 1971 by Olin and the predecessor lessee of the site, the Calabama Chemical Co. In 1972, former EPA Administrator William D. Ruckelshaus, currently the EPA Administrator-Designate, banned the use of DDT in this country, except for limited situations.

In the late 1970s, widespread DDT contamination was discovered at the plant site, in nearby waterways (the Huntsville Spring Branch-Indian Creek, a tributary of the Tennessee River), and on more than 1400 acres

of the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, the largest and oldest national refuge in Alabama. Elevated levels of DDT have also been detected in wildlife in the area.

In 1980, the Justice Department, at EPA's request, sued Olin, asking them to clean up the contamination. In October 1981, the site was designated one of EPA's top-priority hazardous waste sites for cleanup under the new Superfund program. Superfund is the \$1.6 billion fund authorized under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) which gives EPA the resources to clean up abandoned hazardous waste sites.

Under the settlement, Olin will clean up the DDT residue from the nearby Wheeler refuge and from the sediment of the Huntsville Spring Branch-Indian Creek tributary to reduce DDT levels in fish within a 10-year period.

In addition to paying for the cleanup, Olin will provide \$24 million to assist residents of the contaminated area. This includes \$19 million to satisfy personal injury claims of over 1000 private parties including local residents and local commercial fishermen.

Under the agreement, Olin must submit a comprehensive remedial cleanup plan for the area to a review panel of federal, state and local representatives by June 1, 1984. The review panel will approve or recommend changes to the plan and will provide complete oversight of the cleanup.

As part of the environmental cleanup, Olin also will provide short and long-term environmental monitoring for all affected areas.

The EPA-Olin agreement also settles related suits against Olin by the State of Alabama and three citizens groups.

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