

# News Release

Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency

*The Local Health Department*

*serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties*

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY EXTENDED FURTHER ALONG BAY HARBOR SHORELINE**

(April 18, 2005) The Public Health Advisory restricting access to Little Traverse Bay at Bay Harbor and East Park was extended today to encompass another stretch of shoreline adjacent to a third cement kiln dust (CKD) pile within Bay Harbor. In addition, two areas previously restricted within the Bay Harbor development have been expanded to include all shoreline areas adjacent to known CKD piles, bringing the total length of restricted shoreline to over one mile. The expansion of the health advisory is due to the identification of new seeps of highly caustic discharges from wastes left behind from the former Penn Dixie cement plant, according to officials at the Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency, the health department that serves Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.

Scott Kendzierski, Director of Environmental Health Services, said that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) verified monitoring data collected by CMS Energy Corp., which is responsible for the environmental clean up, that showed highly alkaline leachate impacting Little Traverse Bay from a fourth area of contamination. This seep, located just west of the Bay Harbor golf clubhouse, had pH results reaching values of 12.5. According to Michigan Department of Community Health, pH greater than 9.0 may result in irritation to eyes, skin, and mucous membranes; pH levels over 11.5 may result in irreversible damage to these tissues.

“Consultants for CMS and EPA continue to find areas of leachate seeping into Lake Michigan,” said Kendzierski, who posted the Public Health Advisory for two areas in Bay Harbor and a third in East Park over the last few weeks. “We’ve moved from continually reacting to sampling events to advising the public to stay clear of all shoreline areas near the source piles as investigative work continues.”

The Public Health Advisory extends shoreline restrictions to a total of almost 7,000 linear feet (about 1.25 miles) along the former location of the Penn Dixie cement plant. The first area, known as the Central Pile, starts at the western edge of Bay Harbor Lake and extends 4,500 feet to the west. The second location within Bay Harbor is identified as the West Pile and affects 800 feet of shore west of the Bay Harbor golf clubhouse. The East Pile impacts over 1,600 feet of shoreline at East Park, a public park in Resort Township. The Northwest Michigan Community

Health Agency is requiring areas with confirmed contamination from CKD leachate to be fenced off, hazardous material signs to be posted, and is also working to control access from Lake Michigan.

Sampling efforts by CMS Energy Corp and EPA continue to produce new data showing additional areas of contamination. "The fact remains that the shorelines adjacent to the known source areas have not been fully evaluated or characterized," said Kendzierski. "Measurement data continues to show new areas of concern along the shore."

Health Department officials continue to work with officials from CMS Energy, the EPA, and other regulatory agencies to address environmental and public health concerns caused by caustic leachate in the Bay Harbor area. The Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency is the local health department serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties. Its staff is dedicated to preventing disease and injury and promoting healthy communities. For additional information about the Public Health Advisory, contact Kendzierski at (231) 547-7651.

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