

News Release

Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency

The Local Health Department

serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties

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Health Department Lifts First Health Advisory at Bay Harbor

(July 31, 2006) Public health officials canceled one of the Health Advisories at Bay Harbor today for a 2,800-foot stretch of shoreline located six tenths (.60) of a mile west of the Bay Harbor Lake entry channel. The removal of the advisory comes after confirming the water along the section of shoreline complies with Michigan water quality standards for pH (less than 9.0 standard units on a scale of 1 to 14, from very acidic to highly caustic - pH of 7 is neutral). Other Health Advisories remain in effect for three sections of the shoreline at Bay Harbor and East Park, due to contamination from cement kiln dust (CKD) leachate originating from waste generated by the cement plant that once operated at the site.

“It is encouraging to see this kind of progress,” said Scott Kendzierski, Director of Environmental Health Services for the Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency, the Health Department that serves Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. “There have been many parties working together to resolve the contamination problems at Bay Harbor and East Park and what we’re seeing is the result of this collaboration. The data provided by the US Environmental Protection Agency and CMS Energy demonstrate that the highly alkaline discharges previously observed from this section of shoreline are no longer a threat to human health.” After evaluating the monitoring data, EPA authorized CMS Energy Corp., which is responsible for the environmental clean up, to remove access control fencing and signage along this section of shoreline.

The affected shoreline is positioned within Bay Harbor, along Little Traverse Bay and north of Coastal Drive and Coastal Ridge Court. “This was the first release area that was discovered in 2004,” said Kendzierski. “At that time, there was a large plume of discolored CKD leachate impacting Little Traverse Bay, which has improved both visually and analytically.” The updated advisory status will remove shoreline restrictions from both vacant properties and from in front of several residential homes.

CMS has installed several leachate control systems to intercept CKD leachate from reaching Lake Michigan. Since installation, the systems have been continually monitored to evaluate their performance and effectiveness. “The collection systems are steadily improving release areas

where they have been installed,” Kendzierski said. “All of the systems are evaluated for ways to enhance their performance and most release areas are showing significant improvement from just a few years ago.”

Additional Health Advisories are still in effect until it can be finally demonstrated that effective engineering controls can reliably manage leachate releases. “Much has been learned regarding the way CKD leachate behaves at the various release areas, which will be valuable for future leachate control design strategies,” Kendzierski said. “However, each site is unique and may require innovation in control methods.”

As work progresses on the site, both the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency will be evaluating data to prevent human exposure to high pH leachate, a substance similar to strong bleach. “Our responsibility is to the public,” said Kendzierski. “As information becomes available, we will communicate where a health hazard exists and when those areas have been determined safe again.”

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 maps and other additional information about Bay Harbor Health Advisories, visit the Health Department website at www.nwhealth.org.

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