



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **EPA Announces Passaic River Superfund Cleanup Plan – One of the Largest and Costliest in the United States**

*A Complete Bank to Bank Cleanup of the Lower 8 Miles is Expected to Benefit Communities and Create Jobs*

**March 4, 2016 (Newark, NJ):** The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the long awaited proposed remedy today detailing the cleanup of the lower eight miles of the Passaic River Superfund site. The cleanup consists of a complete bank-to-bank dredge and cap with off-site (out-of-state) disposal of contaminants. Communities along the site include Newark, Harrison, East Newark and Kearny.

NY/NJ Baykeeper and the Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) support EPA's remedy and urge local and state officials to support the cleanup plan as well.

“The only statement we should be hearing from the polluting companies now is ‘When can we start this cleanup and return the Passaic River back to the community?’” said **Debbie Mans, Executive Director of NY/NJ Baykeeper and co-chair of the Passaic River Superfund Community Advisory Group**. “The communities along the lower Passaic River have waited for over 30 years, since the

first listing of this site onto Superfund, for a cleanup. It is irresponsible and immoral for the polluting companies to delay a cleanup any longer.”

**Joseph Della Fave, Executive Director of the ICC** said, “For decades, the people of Newark and the communities along the Passaic have waited for the return of a healthy river. With a new Riverfront Park, Newarkers have greater access to the river than ever before, yet the river remains polluted. The comprehensive cleanup of the Passaic must begin immediately and this should be funded by the parties responsible for its demise. We fully support the EPA cleanup plan. For the sake of Newark's revitalization, the environmental justice due to our community, and for all life along the river, we want a total cleanup now.”

“A comprehensive cleanup will benefit all of the communities along the lower Passaic River and create 600-700 jobs a year over several years,” said **Ana Baptista, ICC Board member and co-chair of the Community Advisory Group**. “These communities deserve the same level of cleanup as the communities along the Hudson River, especially considering the many environmental and public health burdens already present in these neighborhoods.”

“The 70 companies that comprise the ‘Cooperating Parties Group’ and Occidental/Tierra Solutions have financially benefited by not properly disposing of their toxics – instead, using the Passaic River as a dumping ground. It is time for the polluters to stop paying their lobbyists and lawyers and start paying for a cleanup of the River. We deserve to have the River returned to us,” **Mans** said.

The Cooperating Parties Group (CPG) is comprised of polluting companies that have taken advantage of the River for decades. The CPG has been lobbying for a further delay of the cleanup process as well as a weaker cleanup.

The Passaic River Diamond Alkali site was first declared a Superfund site in 1984. For about 30 years, various companies dumped dioxins, PCBs, mercury, DDT, and Agent Orange into the River posing serious human health risks. The entire region has been under a fish consumption advisory due to years of contamination.

“As an environmental justice community, Newark has been denied full access of the river due to the actions of unethical polluters,” said **Baptista**.

The proposed cleanup of the lower eight miles of the River (the most contaminated section of the Superfund site) was announced in May 2014. Three public hearings were held and thousands of petition signatures and comments supporting the proposed

cleanup plan were received by the USEPA. NY/NJ Baykeeper and Ironbound Community Corporation co-chair the Community Advisory Group (CAG) for the Superfund site. The majority of the CAG supported the preferred cleanup plan proposed by the USEPA, with the remaining members of the CAG urging the USEPA to go further with the cleanup. No one on the CAG supported an alternative cleanup proposal proposed by the Responsible Parties that would have removed far less contaminated sediment.

A partial list of Responsible Parties for the pollution of the Passaic River include:

Benjamin Moore & Co.

Campbell Foundry Company

Chevron Texaco Corporation

E.I duPont de Nemours & Co.

Fragrances North America

General Electric Company

General Motors Corporation

Honeywell International, Inc.

Monsanto Co.

Newell Rubbermaid, Inc.

Occidental Chemical Corp.

Otis Elevator Co.

PSE&G Corp.

The Sherwin Williams Co.

Tiffany & Company

***About NY/NJ Baykeeper***

NY/NJ Baykeeper is the citizen guardian of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. Founded in 1989, Baykeeper's mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the environment of one

of the most urban estuaries on Earth - benefiting its natural and human communities. Through Estuary-wide programs Baykeeper seeks to end pollution, improve public access, conserve and restore public lands, restore aquatic habitats, encourage appropriate and discourage inappropriate development, carry out public education, and work with federal and NY/NJ state regulators and citizen groups as partners in planning for a sustainable future. [www.nynjbaykeeper.org](http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org)

***About Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC)***

ICC has been serving Newark's Ironbound community since 1969. The Ironbound is a multi-ethnic, largely working class neighborhood facing challenges including environmental degradation, air pollution, overcrowded schools, limited affordable housing and conditions of poverty. Its mission is to engage and empower individuals, families, and groups in realizing their aspirations and together, work to create a just, vibrant and sustainable community. ICC's programs include children after school and summer programs, family services, adult education, senior citizen services, and community environmental justice, organizing, and planning and development programs. [www.ironboundcc.org](http://www.ironboundcc.org)

For more information on the Superfund site see [here](#). For more information on the CAG see [here](#).

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Protecting, preserving, and restoring the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary since 1989.  
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