

May 1, 2014

The Bridgeton, Missouri radioactive landfill fire – Update since the release of “Republic Services Toxic Investments: Liabilities Mount at Nuclear Waste Landfill”

Background

On April 23, 2014, the Teamsters [released a report](#) detailing escalating costs and risks to the public, workers and investors due to Republic Services, Inc.’s [NYSE: RSG] mismanagement of its Bridgeton/West Lake Superfund landfill in Bridgeton, Missouri:

- The Bridgeton/West Lake landfill contains 8,700 tons of World War II-era radioactive nuclear wastes. It also has an active underground fire that is spreading towards the radioactive materials.
- Elected Missouri officials, community groups, environmental activists and labor organizations are advocating for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to remove the nuclear wastes and charge Republic for the cost of the cleanup. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is already contracting with the Army Corps of Engineers to construct a barrier between the underground fire and the nuclear waste.
- Republic built additional gas-collection wells, updated its leachate collection system, and installed a new landfill cover during the past year. These remediation attempts failed to solve the odor problems. The Missouri A.G. is suing Republic, and the company just agreed to [pay a \\$6.8 million settlement](#) to residents.
- An additional [lawsuit was recently filed](#) by local residents, alleging that the radiation has spread into the community.

Events of the past week

In the week since the report was released, a number of events have unfolded which indicate that the danger at the landfill is even worse than local residents and workers had previously been told:

- 1) April 25, 2014: Local citizens concerned about the nuclear wastes have soil near the landfill tested. Results show [radioactivity in the soil at youth ballfields nearby](#).
- 2) April 26, 2014: The Missouri Department of Natural Resources [agrees with the conclusions of independent landfill expert Todd Thalhamer, and requests a response from Republic](#). Mr. Thalhamer analyzed a report Republic had paid a contractor to write, and refuted many of its conclusions. Republic’s report claimed that the radioactive wastes were not interacting with the fire and did not pose a threat to the public. [Mr. Thalhamer independently concluded that the underground fire](#) could: (a) Result in the release of radionuclides; (b) result in the combustion, melting, and/or altering of the stability of the radioactive material; and (c) affect workers, first responders, the community and/or the environment.
- 3) April 28, 2014. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources sends Republic [a notice of extensive violations at the Bridgeton Landfill](#) (the site of much remediation work in 2013). [The violations include: adversely affecting public health](#); failure to protect the health and safety of landfill workers; failure to operate the site in accordance with approved plans; improperly operated leachate system; illegal off-site leachate discharges; burning solid waste; high methane levels; and migrating decomposition gases.
- 4) April 28, 2014. The St. Charles County Council joins the St. Louis and Bridgeton City Councils in calling for the [cleanup of the radioactive waste to be transferred to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#).
- 5) April 29, 2014. U.S. Senator Roy Blunt, R-MO says that [radioactive waste at the landfill may have to be moved](#), and that the safety of people living nearby is the top priority.
- 6) April 29, 2014. Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster [calls on the EPA to test for radiological contamination](#) in the community surrounding the West Lake/Bridgeton landfill. He also asks the St. Louis County Circuit Court to set a trial date for his pending lawsuit against Republic Services.

Our Initial Conclusions

The radioactive materials appear to be widespread and may be interacting with the fire already. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should take over the site from the EPA. If excavation is too dangerous, Republic should be required to pay to relocate residents. Starting immediately, on-site workers need additional protection.