

Notice of Initiation of the Second Five-Year Review for Remedial Action at Building 23 Grace Curtis Bay Facility, Baltimore, Maryland

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is conducting its Second Five-Year Review for the W.R. Grace & Co. (Grace) Curtis Bay Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) Site, Baltimore, Maryland. USACE has federal responsibility for cleanup under FUSRAP pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (CERCLA), and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan. A legally required assessment, the Five-Year Review is to confirm that remedial actions initiated at sites where remediation is in progress or have long-term remedies in place remain protective of human health and the environment. This review is not being initiated in response to new findings or changes in site conditions.

The review process involves an evaluation of the residual radioactivity remaining in the southwest quadrant of Building 23 at Grace's Curtis Bay site. In that building in the 1950s, monazite sand processing was conducted to extract the radioactive element thorium for the U.S. Government under contract with the Atomic Energy Commission. As a result of the processing operations, low levels of radioactive contamination remain in the southwest quadrant of the building.

In 2005, USACE formalized the selection of a permanent remedy, pursuant to CERCLA, which provided for decontamination and partial removal of building components. In 2008, Grace and the U.S. Government entered into a Settlement Agreement, which designated responsibility for the remedial action to Grace, with coordination and oversight by USACE. From 2009-2013, the remedy was implemented. While conducting that work, Grace and USACE determined that complete demolition of the southwest quadrant (without reconstruction) will be the most protective, effective and implementable remedy. In February 2020, USACE signed an amendment to the 2005 Record of Decision to formalize the plan to demolish the affected portion of the building. Under USACE oversight, Grace has conducted some of the pre-demolition work involving re-routing of utilities around the area to be demolished to ensure safety and allow for continued plant operations during the work.

Demolition activities are yet to be scheduled and will be conducted under approved plans that include engineering controls, air monitoring and controls, and regulatory oversight to continue to prevent the release of contaminants while protecting workers, the surrounding community, and the environment. Remedial activities are overseen by USACE and are conducted independently of ongoing manufacturing operations at the site.

The methods, findings, and conclusions of the review will be documented in a Five-Year Review Report. The report will also identify issues found during the review, if any, and propose recommendations to address them. After completion, estimated for September 2026, the Five-Year Review report will be available to the public online, along with other project documents and reports, at <https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/WRGrace/>.

For more information about the project or to provide feedback regarding the remedial actions that have been implemented for consideration as part of the Five-Year Review, please contact Julie Kaiser, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager, at (443) 447-4277 or julie.e.kaiser@usace.army.mil.