

 **OhioEPA** 
State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Media file
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TO: Governor Taft

FROM: Chris Jones, Director, Ohio EPA 

SUBJECT: News Media Reports about Contamination in Marion

I wanted to give you a short briefing about today's media interest in new information on a contaminated area near the River Valley school grounds in Marion. The Dispatch reported today that there is an "imminent threat" to public health as a result of contamination that has been documented on adjacent Army Reserves property. This has unnecessarily alarmed the community, and I made myself available to several reporters this afternoon to try to clarify the situation.

The contaminated area has been there for years, and the public knew it existed. However, the Army Reserves recently made public some reports on drum waste and soil samples that show high levels of certain contaminants in the soil. Certainly, if someone were to trespass on the property and come in contact with the drums or contaminated soil, there would be an imminent threat. However, we have no reason to believe there is any new threat to people on the River Valley school grounds. This Army Reserves waste area (500-800 feet from the school fence line and 1500-1800 feet from the school) has been there for a long time, and the indoor and outdoor air monitoring we did last year showed no reason for concern.

However, to allay public fears I have asked for additional air monitoring to be set up next week inside the school. My intention is to reconfirm that there is no threat to the students' health. We also today got a commitment from the Army to fence in the entire area immediately (three sides of the heavily wooded area are currently fenced and there is no indication that anyone has been on the property); set up air monitoring at the fence line within one week; and remove the drums and contaminated soil within 6 weeks.

I also spoke today with U.S. Senator DeWine, who again pledged his ongoing support and intention to ensure we get whatever cooperation we need from the federal government. Finally, I spoke with the superintendent of the River Valley Schools and assured him that we feel the school remains safe for the students, but will confirm it with additional air monitoring next week. I plan to personally meet with the superintendent and tour the site as soon as we can accommodate it on my schedule.