



OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

September 5, 2014

Timothy L. Firestine
Chief Administrative Officer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District
P.O. Box 1715
ATTN: CENAB-EN-HM (Russell Marsh)
Baltimore, MD 21203
Via email: Russell.E.Marsh@usace.army.mil

Dear Mr. Marsh:

Please accept these comments on the Forest Glen Annex Installation Restoration Program June, 2014, Report, "Engineering Evaluation / Cost Analysis for Non-time Critical Removal Action: Control of Exposure to Near-Surface Waste at Ball Field Landfill."

The United States Army has endeavored to address hazardous waste found at the Fort Detrick/Forest Glen Army Annex in Silver Spring, Maryland, and its impacts on surrounding communities. Near-surface waste associated with a landfill near the Annex Ball Field has been discovered in portions of the Ireland Creek Valley. The impacted area of the Valley is on Annex property and includes the scenic and historic Ireland Trail that has been a popular public amenity. Known hazards include discarded medical materials and certain toxic substances, but further studies are required to identify additional sub-surface hazards that might exist.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has analyzed eight alternatives for mitigation. Alternatives range from a required "no action" alternative to varying levels of environmental clean-up and installation of fencing to limit access to affected areas. Objections have been voiced by users of the Ireland Trail who are concerned that USACE would limit access to the Ireland Trail and the adjacent Ireland Creek Valley.

Local government has a responsibility, first and foremost, to maintain public safety. As an agent of Montgomery County Government, I believe the existence of toxic materials in the area and the uncertainty of what other toxins may be present require the unhappy but necessary step of imposing certain restrictions to public access in the area. Therefore, I support Alternative #4, the USACE's preferred alternative. This maintains access to a large portion of the Ireland Trail while preventing access to areas that are known to harbor hazardous waste and toxins. While Alternative #4 provides for the installation of a security fence, it would be less restrictive to the Ireland Trail and would have fewer impacts on the forested areas of Ireland Creek Valley than other alternatives.

Thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Phil Alpersen
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