

BUCKS COUNTY Courier Times

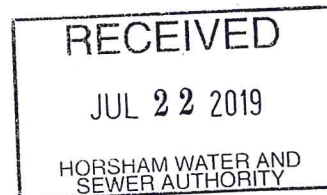
Navy disposes of contaminated soil in Berks County landfill

By Jenny Wagner

By Kyle Bagenstose

Posted Jul 19, 2019 at 4:45 PM

Updated Jul 19, 2019 at 4:45 PM



William Lin, environmental coordinator for the Navy, on Friday confirmed it had disposed of the soil, which is contaminated with PFAS, at the Pioneer Crossing Landfill in Birdsboro, Pennsylvania.

The Navy has disposed of more than 4,300 tons of highly contaminated soil from the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove in a lined landfill in Berks County.

The soil contains PFAS chemicals from firefighting foams used for decades at the Horsham base and was removed last year as part of an effort to stop the spread of the chemicals into nearby groundwater, surface water and drinking water.

William Lin, environmental coordinator for the Navy, on Friday confirmed it had disposed of the soil at the Pioneer Crossing Landfill in Birdsboro, Pennsylvania. Landfill officials did not return calls from this news organization but the facility's website states that it is approved to accept residual wastes and special wastes, and it is "rigorously designed to protect the environment from any harmful contaminants."

"The Navy confirmed the selected landfill is lined and meets EPA RCRA Subtitle D landfill requirements," Lin said. "It is important to note that Navy verified this landfill has a permit from PADEP that allowed it to accept the waste, and EPA Region 3 provided approval of the disposal site for this waste shipment."

The Navy faced difficulty finding a disposal site after a landfill operated by the Cumberland County Improvement Authority in Deerfield Township, New Jersey, changed its mind about accepting the soil earlier this year. The soil sat encased in an “impermeable material” and atop a concrete pad at the base while the Navy searched for another place to send it.

Lin said the disposal cost was slightly higher than the South Jersey landfill, but was within the budgeted amount.

At a public meeting last month, Gregory Preston, director of the Navy’s Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission’s Program Management Office East, said it likely won’t remove any more contaminated soil because of the difficulty.

“What the Navy started to do was a good idea to try and be helpful. Turned out to become unideal,” Preston said. “Being proactive may not be the best thing at this point in time.”

He pointed out that PFAS are unregulated chemicals and there is no requirement that the Navy remove contaminated soil.

Area residents have expressed concerns about where the soil would be sent, and whether it could lead to other communities having to deal with contamination.