

Update: New Sampling Schedule for Soil Sampling in Residential Yards near J.H. Baxter & Co. Wood Treatment Facility in Eugene

What's happening

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is requiring J.H. Baxter & Co., owner of a wood treatment facility in Eugene, to collect soil samples in nearby residential yards to determine if contaminants from the company's plant have accumulated in the neighborhood. Due to the time needed to obtain access agreements with property owners and sampling sequencing, this event is expected to take place between September and November 2021.

DEQ has formed a technical team that includes the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency, the Oregon Health Authority, Oregon State University and the City of Eugene. The technical team will investigate the sources and extent of the contamination and any potential health risks to the community.

When the soil sampling analysis is complete, DEQ will share the results with the residents whose yards were sampled. DEQ will inform residents if sampling results indicate the need for soil cleanup. There will also be a public meeting to share the investigation results and any follow-up actions with the general public.

Background

The 31-acre site at 85 Baxter St. has been an active wood treatment facility since the early 1940s. Historical spills and operational practices have caused soil and groundwater contamination. The facility has also had past violations of their air permit. The local community has complained of odors and expressed concern over related health effects of Baxter's emissions.

Since 1989 DEQ and LRAPA have investigated the facility, issued enforcement actions, and required onsite cleanup of contamination. In October 2019, DEQ issued a cleanup plan, called a Record of Decision, or ROD, which required offsite sampling and other cleanup actions on the Baxter property. Also in 2019, LRAPA selected Baxter as one of the first facilities in Lane County to go through the Cleaner Air Oregon regulatory process. Baxter must complete all required Cleaner Air Oregon steps as a

condition of their permit to operate. DEQ sampled soil near Baxter in 2020. While sampling results did not identify contamination that could be an immediate threat to the health of nearby residents, the results indicated more detailed, yard-specific sampling was necessary.

Next steps

DEQ will share and explain the results from the yard-specific sampling with residents as soon as they are available. DEQ also plans to host a meeting with the public.

If the test results show contaminant concentrations exceed DEQ's residential cleanup standards, cleanup of the soil may be needed. If so, Baxter would be responsible for the cleanup.

Where can I get more information?

DEQ's Baxter webpage at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Programs/Pages/JH-Baxter.aspx>

Information on the Cleaner Air Oregon Process can be found at LRAPA's webpage:

<http://www.lrapa.org/327/JH-Baxter-Co---Eugene-Plant>

You can also contact DEQ Cleanup Project Manager Susan Turnblom, at 541-687-7464, or email: DEQWRCleanup@deq.state.or.us

LRAPA Public Affairs Manager Travis Knudsen, at 541-736-1056 ext. 217, or email: travis@lrapa.org

OHA Environmental Health Assessment Program at 971-673-0482, or email: ehap.info@state.or.us

Alternative formats

A Spanish translation is included, but DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than these two upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



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