

CLFV NEWS

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For Immediate Release

INDEPENDENT SCIENTISTS MAKING PROGRESS CHARACTERIZING OMYA'S OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

Section 5 consultants have begun to report new data as part of their independent expert evaluation of Omya's Florence Processing Site

FLORENCE VT (August 7, 2007): A team of scientists selected to perform a study of the human health and environmental effects of Omya's mineral processing activities in Florence have begun to share preliminary data from their investigation.

The Section 5 study was required by state legislation passed in June 2005 that called for a review of the environmental and human health impacts of calcium carbonate processing at Omya's Florence plant. A group of diverse stakeholders, known as the Section 5 Oversight Team, was convened in January 2006 to assist in the selection of qualified scientists to conduct the investigation and to ensure that the study is carried out in an impartial and credible manner. CLF Ventures, the nonprofit consulting affiliate of the Conservation Law Foundation, was hired by Omya to convene and facilitate the group's meetings.

From June 2006 to January 2007, the scientists reviewed information previously collected at the Omya site to assess its accuracy and completeness. At the conclusion of this process, the scientists identified the types of additional information that would be needed to answer questions about Omya's impacts. This spring, the scientists developed detailed work plans to sample for possible contaminants in water, dust, and air around the Omya site.

Over the past several months, the Section 5 consultants have begun their field work -- drilling new wells, collecting and analyzing water samples, deploying and beginning to operate ambient air monitors, and working on noise issues. The scientists issue monthly progress reports, which are sent to the Oversight Team and also posted for public viewing on the *Omya in Vermont* web site. The July 2007 Progress Report, released on August 6th, is one of the first monthly reports to summarize new field data collected during the Section 5 study.

A copy of the July 2007 Progress Report is available online at:

<http://www.omyainvermont.net/docs/Section%205%20Updates/July%202007%20progress%20report.pdf>

A majority of the findings to date are consistent with previous data collected at and near the Omya site. Some of the data have not yet been fully validated, and so should be considered preliminary. Tests for arsenic and flotation reagent show results similar to other recent sampling events. However, a new discovery is the detection of perchlorate in surface water discharged from the Hogback Quarry.

The Section 5 consultants sampled for this chemical at the quarry because perchlorate is found in some blasting compounds, as well as other explosives such as fireworks, and certain fertilizers. Perchlorate was detected in surface water at the northern and southern ends of Hogback Quarry at levels of 77 parts per billion (ppb) and 7.9 ppb, respectively. Additional samples will be taken during the next few weeks to look for evidence of perchlorate in the surrounding environment.

“We’re pleased that valuable and new information is coming out of the Section 5 process. The work being done by the Section 5 consultants is trusted by stakeholders. By the end of the study we’ll have a good picture of what environmental and health impacts, if any, are occurring” said Jasmine Tanguay, Project Manager at CLF Ventures.

The Section 5 investigation is ongoing, and the final report will be delivered to the legislature on January 15, 2008.

The Section 5 scientists are led by a team at Cambridge Environmental Inc., a leading research and consulting firm that assesses and helps to minimize risks to health and the environment. Geosyntec Consultants Inc., a nationally-renowned geotechnical and hydrological consulting firm, is providing a review of site geology and groundwater flow at the site.

CLF Ventures is the non-profit affiliate of the Conservation Law Foundation, New England’s most influential environmental advocacy organization. CLF Ventures works with clients to implement projects that have demonstrable environmental gain.

Previous monthly reports and additional information regarding the Section 5 process may be found on the website: http://omyainvermont.com/lib_sect5.htm.

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