



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Trafalgar Site Update

NORTH LITTLE ROCK—The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) met with Governor Asa Hutchinson late Friday, February 15, to discuss the status of the Trafalgar site and next course of action. This week, ADEQ will file a supplemental appropriation bill to give ADEQ authority to contract to address the site. This is a necessary step toward financing the work that needs to be done.

ADEQ has been exploring more cost-effective alternatives and is evaluating multiple proposals from qualified fire response experts. Proposals are being evaluated based on viability, timeline to complete, cost, and further impact to residents.

Governor Asa Hutchinson:

“I’m pleased by the progress ADEQ and the Arkansas Forestry Commission have made so far in on-site preparation at the Trafalgar fire location. In our meeting Friday, ADEQ shared several proposals for on-site cleanup, and I expect a decision in the coming days. I continue to share the concerns of the Bella Vista residents, and I am committed to getting this complex situation resolved as quickly—and safely—as possible.”

ADEQ Director Becky W. Keogh:

“As we evaluate a path forward, ADEQ continues to keep the concerns of Bella Vista’s residents in mind. ADEQ has spoken with many residents impacted by the smoke from the underground fire. We understand the concerns; we are listening; and we are working with experts to create the most comprehensive solution for this community.”

On-site preparation will continue throughout the next few weeks. ADEQ is working with EnSafe, local and county officials, and other entities to contract for and begin additional on-site work, including:

- A staging area that must be created around the site by clearing trees and other vegetation.
- An access road that must be constructed.
- The construction of a support system to facilitate fire control and fire response, which will vary depending on the plan selected to extinguish the fire and eliminate the smoke.

ADEQ is continuing to work with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal officials to secure federal funding. Several options have been discussed with EPA, but at this time the State has not received any financial assistance. State response funds of up to 7.3 million dollars have been obligated to this action. Expedited funding has been expended to take interim measures to reduce the spread of fire, create fire breaks, deploy monitoring, and develop a site specific response plan.

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