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EPA AND STATE SIGN WAUKEGAN CLEANUP AGREEMENT

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region V Administrator Valdas V. Adamkus announced today that EPA and the State of Illinois have entered into a contract to begin a cleanup of hazardous wastes in Waukegan Harbor. Nearly one million pounds of highly toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) have been located in and around the harbor.

The project will be conducted under the Federal Superfund law, the provisions of which are designed to solve hazardous waste problems like the one at Waukegan. The contract calls for an initial feasibility study of various alternative cleanup methods.

This study will rely heavily on previous studies of the Waukegan Harbor problem already conducted by EPA. Additional agreements concerning the actual design of the project and removal of contaminated materials are expected to follow the contract announced today.

"This agreement with the State of Illinois," Adamkus said, "clears the way for initial expenditure of federal and state money on the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor."

In a concurrent announcement, Adamkus reported that EPA has indicated to the Federal District Court its intention to ask that the pending law suit against Outboard Marine Corp. be stayed. The law suit, brought by EPA in 1978 against the Outboard Marine Corp., alleges that Outboard Marine Corp. is responsible for

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the pollution of Waukegan Harbor and asks that the company be required to pay for the cleanup. Adamkus stressed that his agency's request to stay the court suit will not constitute a settlement of EPA's claims.

"We are now directing all of our efforts toward accomplishment of the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor," the Regional Administrator declared. "When this is done, we will seek to recover from the responsible parties the funds spent on the cleanup project. In the meantime, a stay in litigation will permit us to proceed with Superfund action.

"We have been trying diligently for a long time to start the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor," Adamkus said. "The signing of the Superfund agreements with the state now permits this work to begin. I am happy that the federal and state governments are in complete agreement to carry out the cleanup of the site. The primary concern of EPA, the Illinois EPA, and the Illinois Attorney General has always been that Waukegan Harbor be cleaned up as soon as possible."

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