



STATE OF NEVADA

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Jim Gibbons, Governor

Allen Biaggi, Director

Leo M. Drozdoff, P.E., Administrator

March 11, 2010

Mr. Mark Paris
Basic Remediation Company
875 West Warm Springs Road
Henderson, NV 89011

Mr. Matt Paque
Tronox LLC
3301 NW 150th
Oklahoma City, OK 73134

Mr. Curt Richards
Olin Corporation
3855 North Ocoee Street, Suite 200,
Cleveland, TN 37312

Mr. Joe Kelly
Montrose Chemical Corp of CA
600 Ericksen Ave NE, Suite 380
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Mr. Brian Spiller
Stauffer Management Co LLC
1800 Concord Pike
Wilmington, DE 19850-6438

Mr. Craig Wilkinson
Titanium Metals Corporation
PO Box 2128
Henderson, NV 89009

Re. **BMI Plant Sites and Common Areas Projects, Henderson, Nevada**
Soil Physical and Chemical Property Measurement and Calculation Guidance

Dear Sirs and Madam:

All of the parties listed above shall be referred to as "the Companies" for the purposes of this letter. Attachment A provides guidance regarding measurement and calculations for soil physical and chemical properties. The pertinent changes have been highlighted in Attachment A.

Please contact me with any questions (tel: 702-486-2850 x247; e-mail: brakvica@ndep.nv.gov).

Sincerely,

Brian A Rakvica, P.E.
Supervisor, Special Projects Branch
Bureau of Corrective Actions
Fax: (702) 486-5733

BAR:s

ECC: Jim Najima, NDEP, BCA, Carson City
Shannon Harbour, NDEP, BCA, Las Vegas
William Knight, NDEP, BCA, Las Vegas
Todd Croft, NDEP, BCA, Las Vegas
Greg Lovato, NDEP, BCA, Carson City

CC: Barry Conaty, Holland & Hart LLP, 975 F Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20004
Brenda Pohlmann, City of Henderson, PO Box 95050, Henderson, NV 89009
Mitch Kaplan, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, mail code: WST-5,
75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105-3901
Ebrahim Juma, Clark County DAQEM, 500 South Grand Central Parkway, PO
Box 555210, Las Vegas, NV, 89155-5210
Ranjit Sahu, BRC, 311 North Story Place, Alhambra, CA 91801
Rick Kellogg, BRC, 875 West Warm Springs, Henderson, NV 89011
Kirk Stowers, Broadbent & Associates, 8 West Pacific Avenue, Henderson, Nevada 89015
George Crouse, Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc., 410 Swing Road, Greensboro, NC 27409
Nicholas Pogoncheff, PES Environmental, Inc., 1682 Novato Blvd., Suite 100, Novato, CA
94947-7021
Lee Erickson, Stauffer Management Company LLC, P.O. Box 18890 Golden, CO 80402
Michael J. Foster, Tronox LLC, P.O. Box 268859, Oklahoma City, OK 73126-8859
Tom Reed, Tronox LLC, P.O. Box 268859, Oklahoma City, OK 73126-8859
Keith Bailey, Environmental Answers, 3229 Persimmon Creek Drive, Edmond, OK 73013
Susan Crowley, Crowley Environmental LLC, 366 Esquina Dr., Henderson, NV 89014
Mike Skromyda, Tronox LLC, PO Box 55, Henderson, Nevada 89009
Jeff Gibson, AMPAC, 3883 Howard Hughes Pkwy, Ste 700, Las Vegas, NV 89169
Cindi Byrns, Olin Chlor Alkali, PO Box 86, Henderson, Nevada 89009
Paul Sundberg, Montrose Chemical Corporation, 10733 Wave Crest Court
Stockton, CA 95209
Deni Chambers, Northgate Environmental Management, Inc., 300 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite
510, Oakland, CA 94612
Robert Infelise, Cox Castle Nicholson, 555 California Street, 10th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94104-1513
Michael Ford, Bryan Cave, One Renaissance Square, Two North Central Avenue, Suite 2200,
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Dave Gratson, Neptune and Company, 1505 15th Street, Suite B, Los Alamos, NM 87544
Paul Black, Neptune and Company, Inc., 8550 West 14th Street, Suite 100, Lakewood, CO 80215
Teri Copeland, 5737 Kanan Rd., #182, Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Paul Hackenberry, Hackenberry Associates, 550 West Plumb Lane, B425, Reno, NV, 89509

Attachment A

Determination of the physical and chemical properties of the vadose zone soils are needed for site-specific evaluations of soil leaching and vapor intrusion. Soil samples should be collected for the evaluation of the physical character of the subsurface during site characterization. Soil can be submitted to a laboratory for the measurement of dry bulk density, grain density, moisture content, and grain size. The recommended geotechnical laboratory methods are as follows:

- Dry Bulk Density ASTM D2937;
- Grain Density ASTM D854;
- Moisture Content ASTM D2216; and
- Grain Size ASTM D422 using both sieve and hydrometer for soil particles finer than No. 200 sieve.
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Total porosity is a calculated value using the equation (Fetter, 2001):

$$n = 1 - \frac{\rho_b}{\rho_s}$$

where: n = total porosity;
 ρ_b = dry bulk density (M/L^3); and
 ρ_s = density of solids (M/L^3).

Soil moisture (gravimetric basis) content reported as a percent is converted to volumetric using the equation (Fetter, 2001):

$$\theta_w = \left(\frac{\rho_b}{\rho_w} \right) \theta_g$$

where: θ_w = volumetric water content (dimensionless);
 ρ_b = dry bulk density (M/L^3);
 ρ_w = density of water (M/L^3); and
 θ_g = gravimetric water content (percentage).

Air-filled porosity is calculated using the equation:

$$\theta_a = n - \theta_w$$

where: θ_a = air filled porosity (dimensionless).

For use of the soil-water partition (SWP) equation to calculate leaching-based site-specific levels (LSSLs) and unsaturated zone leaching models the soil chemical parameters fraction organic carbon (F_{oc}) and soil pH may be used to calculate a site-specific distribution coefficient (K_d). The recommended laboratory methods are as follows:

- Fraction Organic Carbon Walkley-Black method (Nelson and Sommers, 1992); and
- Soil pH ASTM 4972.

The NDEP does not approve the use of methods or standards that are not currently and actively supported by the organization that originally developed them.

REFERENCES

ASTM International, 2000, Standard Test Methods for Moisture, Ash, and Organic Matter of Peat and Other Organic Soils, Designation: D 2974-00. West Conshohocken, PA, www.astm.org.

ASTM International, 2000, Standard Test Method for Density of Soil in Place by the Drive-Cylinder Method, Designation: D 2937-00. West Conshohocken, PA, www.astm.org.

ASTM International, 2001, Standard Test Method for pH of Soils, Designation: D 4972-01. West Conshohocken, PA, www.astm.org.

ASTM International, 2002. Test Method Particle-Size Analysis of Soils, Designation: D 422-63 (2002). West Conshohocken, PA, www.astm.org.

ASTM International, 2006, Standard Test Methods for Specific Gravity of Soil Solids by Water Pycnometer, Designation: D854-06. West Conshohocken, PA, www.astm.org.

Fetter, C. W., 2001. Applied Hydrogeology. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J., 598 p.

Nelson, D. W., and L. E. Sommers. 1982. Total Carbon, Organic Carbon, and Organic Matter. In: A. L. Page et al. (editors), Methods of Soil Analysis: Part 2 Chemical and Microbiological Properties. ASA [American Society of Agronomy, Inc.] Monograph Number 9, p. 539 – 579.