

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

July 14, 2023

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Administrator Regan,

New reports detail a decades-long effort to downplay and conceal the risks of radioactive contamination in St. Louis, Missouri.¹ The details of the report are appalling. Despite knowing of contamination at the West Lake Landfill as early as 1974, the EPA failed to discover and disclose the full extent of the contamination until May of this year. During that time, the contamination has been spreading, leeching into the surrounding land and clinging to trucks leaving the landfill.

This is, as the report says, “the tip of the iceberg.” There are too many incidents of concealed contamination and negligent testing to reproduce in this letter. And these incidents are not confined to the distant past, the EPA ignored clear evidence of new contamination as recently as 2013 in what is now one of the most prominent Superfund sites in the country.

The allegations in this report demand answers. The people of St. Louis have a right to know the full extent of radioactive contamination in their community—along with when exactly the West Lake Landfill will be cleaned up. They deserve answers about the government’s historical actions and they deserve answers about allegations of continuing deception. To that end, please provide my office with answers to the following questions:

1. Why did it take 50 years for the EPA to discover and disclose the extent of radioactive contamination at West Lake Landfill even though the EPA knew that the landfill was contaminated?
2. What recent testing, if any, has the EPA performed to determine if contaminated soil has spread from the West Lake Landfill? Please provide any new information responsive to this request for the benefit of the local community.

¹ Michael Phillips and Jim Salter, *How America’s push for the atomic bomb spawned enduring radioactive waste problems in St. Louis*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (July 12, 2023) <https://apnews.com/article/nuclear-waste-cancer-st-louis-army-corps-school-9e1ceb765822fc53fcbc2e42005adef2>; Allison Kite, *Records reveal 75 years of government downplaying, ignoring risks of St. Louis radioactive waste*, THE MISSOURI INDEPENDENT (July 12, 2023) <https://missouriindependent.com/2023/07/12/st-louis-radioactive-waste-records/>.

3. What is the precise timeline for completion of remediation work? What accounts for persistent delays?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Josh Hawley
United States Senator