

**PUBLIC OVERSIGHT ROUNDTABLE ON
PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN FOR
DESTRUCTION OF SPRING VALLEY MUNITIONS**

**THE HONORABLE COUNCILMEMBER MARY CHEH,
CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS & THE ENVIRONMENT**

**THE HONORABLE COUNCILMEMBER PHIL MENDELSON,
CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
& THE JUDICIARY**



**KEITH A. ANDERSON, INTERIM DIRECTOR
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2010 AT 11:00 A.M., HEARING
THE HISTORIC WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, ROOM 120**

GOOD MORNING, CHAIRPERSON MENDELSON AND CHAIRPERSON CHEH, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE JUDICIARY AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. I AM KEITH ANDERSON, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF THE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

I AM HERE TODAY TO DISCUSS THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' UPCOMING OPERATION OF AN EXPLOSIVE DESTRUCTION SYSTEM IN THE SPRING VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD FOR THE PURPOSE OF DESTROYING FIVE MUNITIONS THAT CONTAIN CHEMICAL WARFARE MATERIALS AND OTHER MUNITIONS. THIS OPERATION IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE SPRING VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF APRIL.

THE DISTRICT'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE SPRING VALLEY MATTER SINCE 1995, WHEN, UNDER AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, TWO ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALISTS WERE HIRED BY THE DISTRICT TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL REVIEW AND GUIDANCE TO THE MILITARY FOR INSTALLATION RESTORATION PROGRAMS AT ACTIVE MILITARY BASES AND FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES IN THE DISTRICT. ONE OF THEIR FIRST TASKS WAS TO REVIEW THE WORK DONE BY THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF A CACHE OF MUNITIONS ON 52ND COURT IN SPRING VALLEY IN JANUARY 1993. THE REVIEW THAT THEY CONDUCTED AND THE

REPORT THAT THEY WROTE RESULTED IN THE CORPS RETURNING TO SPRING VALLEY IN 1998.

SINCE THE CORPS' RETURN, A GREAT DEAL OF WORK HAS BEEN DONE IN SPRING VALLEY, INCLUDING: THE SAMPLING OF NEARLY EVERY PROPERTY IN SPRING VALLEY; THE REMOVAL OF SOIL CONTAMINATED WITH ARSENIC FROM NEARLY 150 PRIVATE PROPERTIES; THE DISCOVERY OF THREE MAJOR BURIAL PITS OF MUNITIONS AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT IN THE GLENBROOK ROAD AREA; THE CLEANUP OF SEVERAL OTHER AREAS NEAR OR ON THE AU CAMPUS WHICH HAD BEEN USED AS DISPOSAL SITES; AND THE BEGINNING OF A MAJOR GROUNDWATER STUDY THROUGHOUT THE SPRING VALLEY AREA. DDOE HAS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL OF THIS WORK.

THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS HAS SELECTED THE USE OF THE EXPLOSIVE DESTRUCTION SYSTEM, OR EDS, ON THE FEDERAL PROPERTY BEHIND SIBLEY HOSPITAL AND ALONG DALECARLIA PARKWAY AS THE SAFEST METHOD FOR DESTROYING THESE MUNITIONS. THOSE FAMILIAR WITH THIS PROJECT HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWING THAT THIS SAME SYSTEM WAS USED AT THE SAME SITE IN 2003 TO DESTROY SAFELY EIGHTEEN CHEMICAL MUNITIONS. WE HAVE COMPLETED AN EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF THE EVENT AND ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE CORPS' USE OF THE EDS AND THE REDUNDANT, PRECAUTIONARY PROJECT DESIGN, IS A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR THE TREATMENT OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS.

ACCORDING TO THE CORPS, THE SYSTEM WILL UTILIZE MULTIPLE SAFETY MEASURES, INCLUDING THE OPERATION INSIDE OF A CLOSED, METAL VAPOR CONTAINMENT STRUCTURE UNDER NEGATIVE PRESSURE. EXHAUST FROM THE STRUCTURE WILL BE ROUTED THROUGH A CHEMICAL FILTRATION SYSTEM, WHICH WILL INCLUDE REAL-TIME AIR MONITORING EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER AIR MONITORING EQUIPMENT WILL BE UTILIZED OUTSIDE OF THE STRUCTURE. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT SAFETY MEASURE WILL BE THE USE OF AN ATMOSPHERIC DISPERSION MODEL, WHICH WITH THE INPUT OF AMBIENT ATMOSPHERIC DATA, WILL DETERMINE IF ANY RELEASE OF CHEMICALS WILL REMAIN ON THE FEDERAL PROPERTY. IF WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE SUCH THAT A RELEASE OF CHEMICAL AGENTS MIGHT BREACH THE FEDERAL PROPERTY BOUNDARY, THE OPERATION WILL NOT OCCUR.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT ALL OF THESE AGENCIES ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE PROPOSED OPERATION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THE CORPS, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) AND OUR PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES TO ENSURE THAT ALL QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ASKED AND THAT ALL NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THE RESIDENTS OF SPRING VALLEY DURING THIS OPERATION.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK BEFORE THIS PUBLIC OVERSIGHT ROUNDTABLE. MY STAFF AND I ARE PREPARED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE.