

## Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Petroleum Brownfields Program

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Petroleum Brownfields Program (PBP) created in 1992 is similar to the MPCA Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) program but focuses on petroleum contamination only. The program was established to assist the transfer and development of petroleum contaminated properties. Every year approximately 200 sites enter the program seeking assistance.

Properties impacted by petroleum must complete a site investigation which fully defines the extent and magnitude of contamination and provide a complete and up to date receptor survey of the surrounding area. Cleanups occur if the contamination poses a risk to human health or the environment.

Because time is often of the essence, the PBP staff will respond within 30 days from the receipt of a site release report. The PBP will issue file closure for release sites after staff concurs that the investigation and/or cleanup has adequately addressed the petroleum contamination. Obtaining file closure is vital to the sale of these properties.

Even after cleanup or MPCA file closure, most properties will have contamination remaining. State law requires that all persons properly manage contaminated soil and water they uncover or disturb – even if they are not the party responsible for the contamination.

Property owners and/or developers must include provisions – called “response actions” – in development plans, describing how petroleum contamination will be managed if encountered. The PBP provides review of proposed response actions and recommends modifications or approval.

Successful participants cooperate and follow MPCA guidance in the investigation and clean up of the contamination. By law, participants are billed for MPCA staff time to provide the requested assistance.

Like VIC, careful consideration is given to public information needs. If there is strong community interest, or if potentially significant risk to public health is discovered, the MPCA will work with local units of government and other state agencies to alert the public with news releases and/ or hold public information meetings.

The PBP process usually ends in success for all. Property owners, developers, or their lenders may receive a legal release of liability and/or environmental closure for the identified contamination. Cities increase their tax base, neighborhood blight is reduced, and the MPCA achieves a cleaner environment by recycling land and avoiding use of undeveloped land.

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