

PCB Risk-Based Disposal Approval

On June 10, 2014, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final risk-based approval to members of the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group (USWAG), including Tri-State Generation and Transmission Assn., Inc. (Tri-State), to dispose of non-liquid PCB remediation waste generated at secure utility assets with as-found PCB concentrations <50 parts per million in non-TSCA approved landfill facilities, including municipal solid waste landfills. In issuing the approval, EPA concluded “that the proposed disposal method, with the conditions listed in the attached final Approvals, meets the requirements under §761.61(c) and will not result in an unreasonable risk to health or the environment when conducted in accordance with these final Approvals.” This approval was renewed on February 12, 2020.

The risk-based approval is protective of the public and the environment because it contains detailed conditions assuring agency oversight, providing public notice, requiring waste characterization and analysis, establishing recordkeeping obligations, and setting specific disposal restrictions. The approval will promote and facilitate efficient PCB remediation waste cleanups, avoiding significant operational and cost impacts associated with the disposal of low-level PCB remediation waste, while remaining protective of human health and the environment.

PCBs (or polychlorinated biphenyls) were historically used as coolants and lubricants in transformers, capacitors, and other electrical equipment because they do not burn easily and are good insulators. The manufacture of PCBs stopped in the U.S. in 1977, but some products containing PCBs have remained in use. Tri-State continues to phase out equipment that contains PCBs from our transmission system. Additionally, as part of the process of decommissioning power plants, transmission substations and related sites, Tri-State routinely tests soils to determine whether they have been contaminated with PCBs as a result of historical operations. When PCBs are identified, Tri-State may need to excavate and properly dispose of the PCB-impacted soil. The EPA approval facilitates the cleanup of these sites in an environmentally safe manner.

A copy of the approval is available at the following link: [USWAG 61c Final Approval](#)

Individuals seeking additional information regarding this Approval may contact the following Tri-State staff:

- Kate Willeford, Senior Environmental Planner, kwilleford@tristategt.org
- Andy Berger, Vice President Environmental Compliance and Policy/ESG, aberger@tristategt.org