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**For further information, contact:**

Nichol Figueiredo, Public Information Officer/Webmaster  
Memorial Building  
150 Concord Street  
Framingham, MA 01702  
Tel: (508) 532-5437

**General Chemical Walks Away From Contamination Clean Up—**

**Framingham Commits to Hold Their Feet to the Fire**

**Framingham, MA** – The Town of Framingham has been notified by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) that General Chemical Corporation, which is responsible for serious chemical contamination in south Framingham, does not intend to comply with its cleanup obligations.

This action comes after decades of MassDEP engagement with General Chemical, requiring them to assess the level of contamination, trace the flow of chemicals from the site, and put cleanup plans in place. Over the years, the Town and neighborhood action groups have strenuously advocated for cleanup of the contamination from the facility.

“General Chemical’s abandonment of their legal and moral obligations is reprehensible. The Town of Framingham intends to pursue every legal avenue available to force the responsible parties to remediate the pollution. We will continue to work with MassDEP and other environmental agencies on the technical issues and we intend to meet with Town Counsel to evaluate all of the Town’s options,” stated Selectmen Chairman Cheryl Tully Stoll. “We also ask the Attorney General’s Office to investigate the conduct of the individuals and corporate entities responsible for the contamination and the clean-up, and will ask the Attorney General and the Commonwealth to pursue every legal avenue to ensure that General Chemical and its officers fulfill all of their responsibilities under the law,” Tully Stoll stated. “The Town will not rest until this neighborhood is made whole.”

The underground chemical plume from this site is migrating toward the Town of Sherborn. State Representative Chris Walsh said, “I have notified my colleague who represents that community and he will be reaching out to engage them in this process. This is an issue I have expended tremendous energies on since I was elected eight years ago. I consider this breach of General Chemical’s obligations in this matter to be an affront to the community and beyond the realm of common decency. I intend to aggressively prod government agencies to find an expedited solution to this matter, which directly affects an environmental justice neighborhood.”

The property located at 133 Leland Street was used originally as a bulk fuel terminal by Gulf Oil in the 1920s. In the 1960s, General Chemical began their operations including hazardous waste treatment and storage, as well as recycling of used solvents. This operation was licensed by MassDEP in 1973, and in 1986 was licensed under a Federal program run jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and MassDEP.

General Chemical was forced to cease business operations in the spring of 2012 and conducted closure of the facility operations including decontamination of the buildings, tanks and equipment under MassDEP supervision during 2012.

After the facility was closed, General Chemical and Trinity General, which owns the property, were required to continue testing and cleanup of the contamination under the terms of an Administrative Consent Order from MassDEP dated March 26, 2014. Since that time, General Chemical has been required to conduct additional testing and reporting; the most recent report in 2016 focused on recommending technologies to achieve an appropriate cleanup.

Framingham Board of Health Vice Chair Michael Hugo has been instrumental in the facility closure and cleanup process during his years on the Board. Mr. Hugo stated, “Since the Board of Health forced the closure of the facility in 2012, we have continued to have significant input into all phases of the testing and reporting. In addition, we have repeatedly and adamantly objected to the inadequacy of the low sum of \$1.8 million required by MassDEP currently held in escrow to cover the cost of cleanup. Clearly, if General Chemical has chosen to walk away, we were correct in our assessment.”

“We will be working with MassDEP and all relevant agencies and parties to make sure that this site is properly cleaned up. Our commitment to this neighborhood and this project is not diminished by this setback,” stated State Representative Jack Lewis.

For more information, contact Michael Blanchard, Director of Public Health at (508) 532-5470.

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