

**APR 13 2010**

Jessica Pepper
iRock, Inc.
1004 W. Doolin
Blackwell, Oklahoma 74631

Dear Ms. Pepper:

Thank you for your November 17, 2009, letter to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) regarding your concerns that the residents of Blackwell, Oklahoma could be exposed to heavy metal contamination in the environment due to the Blackwell Zinc Smelter Site. As a result of the heavy metals present in the environment, you requested that ATSDR consider conducting a public health assessment for your community.

ATSDR worked closely with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) to gather and review the environmental data available for the Blackwell Zinc Site in relationship to your concerns. **We determined that a sufficient amount of environmental sampling data exists and, as a result, ATSDR will conduct a public health assessment activity for this site.** The following information is provided to reaffirm the objectives of the planned evaluation.

As background information, you'll remember from our previous letter dated December 11, 2009, Congress provided ATSDR with the authority to conduct certain public health assessment activities following a request from a community member. ATSDR's public health assessment activities are designed to determine whether people have been, or are currently being exposed to hazardous substances released into the environment from a hazardous waste site or facility—and determine the actions that should be taken to stop or reduce exposures that could harm human health. These evaluations are based on environmental data typically gathered by the state environmental agency or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is important to note that ATSDR's public health assessment activities are not able to determine the cause of an individual's disease, determine the cause of an increased incidence of a disease in a community, or determine whether a particular exposure caused a disease or increased incidence of a disease. If you have questions about the public health evaluation to be conducted for the Blackwell Zinc Smelter Site, please contact CDR Déborah Boling, lead environmental health assessor for this evaluation, at 770-488-0754 or email at DBoling@cdc.gov.

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Thank you for forwarding your concerns to ATSDR. If you have any additional questions regarding ATSDR's process to review your request, please contact CAPT Susan Neurath, ATSDR Petition Coordinator, at (770) 488-3368 or email at SNeurath@cdc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Cibulas". The signature is written in a cursive style.

William Cibulas Jr., Ph.D.
CAPT, U.S. Public Health Service
Director
Division of Health Assessment and Consultation

cc:

Ms. Cheryl Barr, OSDH
Dr. Ed Rhoades, OSDH
Ms. Kelly Dixon, ODEQ
Ms. Sara Downard, ODEQ