



TOWN OF HANOVER
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Town Manager

Town Manager's Opening Statement – USEPA and MassDEP Presentation to the Select Board on the Former National Fireworks Site – September 18, 2023

Dating back to the early part of the 20th century and through the Vietnam War the 240 Acre Parcel currently referred to as the Former National Fireworks Site was used for the development and manufacturing of civilian and military munitions and pyrotechnics. The Town of Hanover purchased 130 acres of the parcel in the 1970's for conservation purposes.

The clean-up work to-date has been paid for from a \$73,000,000 bankruptcy settlement with Tronox, a responsible party at the site. The Town of Hanover has understood all along that the Tronox bankruptcy settlement would be insufficient to get the parcel to a final remedy or, to say it differently, completely cleaned up. The Town of Hanover had been optimistic, until more recently, that the Commonwealth was going to successfully negotiate a settlement with the Potentially Responsible Parties – namely the Department of Defense, MIT, and National Coating Corporation – so that clean-up work could continue uninterrupted and that sufficient funds would be available to complete the work.

It appears now that such a settlement is not possible from the perspective of the Commonwealth. \$15M remains in the project's account and is being used to ensure a safe and secure shutdown of the site – currently planned for a year from now – and funding necessary to move the cleanup forward towards a final remedy has not been identified. Therefore, once the site shuts down next year, we cannot be certain when work will restart.

The Town of Hanover, along with various State agencies including the Attorney General's Office, MassDEP, and the MA Department of Public Health have worked well together on this project. A tremendous amount of clean-up work has taken place over the past 6 years, some areas of site have been cleaned to completion, wetlands are being actively restored, and through extensive air quality and ground water testing of public and private lands in the area, confirmation that Hanover public drinking supplies are not connected in anyway with the site, along with cancer screening studies, we have been able

to show with a strong degree of certainty that this site is not a danger to human health and safety. Nothing has changed regarding these known factors of which there is abundance of information available about on the Town of Hanover's website.

Important factors that have changed more recently include the size and caliber of munitions and explosives that have been found on site that have needed to be removed at great expense to make way for the ecological clean-up, and new information on the extent of mercury contamination downstream from Factory Pond - also very expensive to clean up.

This will be an important evening for the Town of Hanover to hear from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about solutions they have at their disposal to move the project forward, from a financing perspective and a project management perspective, so we can better evaluate this matter.
