

Westminster Plant (MD-146)
Westminster, Carroll County, Maryland

Site Location

Westminster Plant, a former coal gasification plant, was located on George Street in Westminster, Carroll County.

Site History/Environmental Investigations

From 1867 through 1933, the Westminster Plant was an operational coal gasification plant. A predecessor to Baltimore Gas and Electric (BG&E) Company closed the facility in 1933 and used the site for their natural gas service to the area. In 1950, the City of Westminster purchased most of the property from the predecessor to BG&E. The site was later purchased in 1984 by a Commercial Excavating, Inc. BG&E still owns a parcel at the northern end of the property.

In 1985, BG&E retained a consultant to investigate the site. The investigation was conducted in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). DHMH completed a Preliminary Assessment of the site in 1985.

Soil Borings and groundwater samples collected during an initial investigation (Phase I) in 1985 indicated that the soil and shallow groundwater quality was contaminated. A Phase II investigation was completed in 1986 to further define the extent of contamination. Floating hydrocarbons, later specified as weather #4 fuel oil contaminated with polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, were detected in one of the bedrock monitoring wells. The 1988 Phase III investigation focused on the fuel oil contamination. The objective of this phase was to delineate the vertical and horizontal extent of the contamination. Unfortunately, off-site landowner access approval could not be obtained which limited the investigation. A Phase IV investigation completed in 1993 included surface geophysics, installation and sampling of additional monitoring wells, residential well sampling and conducting a short-term product recharge test in the contaminated monitoring well.

In December 1994, Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE's) Oil Control Program (OCP) provided oversight of the removal of three underground storage tanks. OCP negotiated with BG&E on installing a recovery system for product recovery in the contaminated monitoring well. Additional sampling of nearby residential wells, on-site monitoring wells and a nearby creek was completed in 1995.

BG&E's consultant completed a risk assessment report in 1996 and stated "based on the results of the risk assessment, it is unlikely that there is any unacceptable risk to human health and the environment from hypothetical future exposure to constituents in soil and groundwater." MDE approved the risk assessment in the Fall of 1996.

Current Status

The owner had planned to construct a mini-storage facility on the property. To date, the mini-storage facility had not been constructed on the site.

The site is on the State Master list that identifies potential hazardous wastes sites in Maryland. The Master List includes sites identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System and is assigned "No Further Remedial Action Planned" status.

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