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**GOVERNMENT SUES TO RECOVER COSTS OF CLEANING UP
HAZARDOUS WASTES AT 12TH STREET SITE IN WILMINGTON**

Colm F. Connolly, United States Attorney for the District of Delaware, announced today that a Complaint has been filed against three parties to recover in excess of \$3.7 million dollars in costs incurred by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cleaning up hazardous wastes, principally lead, at a site on 12th Street in Wilmington, on the eastern bank of Brandywine Creek, near the present I-495 access ramp. The three defendants are two current owners and one former owner of the site.

The Complaint alleges that from approximately 1905 until 1977, the Electric Hose and Rubber Company operated a facility at the site, at which it manufactured rubber hoses. The company used lead in its manufacturing process to form molds that shaped rubber into hoses. The hose manufacturing process produced a waste containing a lead residue; the Complaint alleges that the company disposed of waste hoses, drums, lead residue and other debris on the site.

The first named defendant in the Complaint is M.A. Hanna Plastic Group, Inc., identified as the corporate successor to the liability of Electric Hose. The other defendants are the Wilmington Economic Development Corporation, known as "WEDCO", to which Electric Hose conveyed the

parcels it owned at the site in 1986; and two individuals, Sidney and Carol Maffett, who purchased one of the parcels from WEDCO in 1987.

The contamination came to light when the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) notified EPA in July of 1999 that DNREC had found drums suspected to contain hazardous substances at the site. DNREC requested that EPA conduct further investigation. Between August of 1999 and February of 2000, EPA conducted sampling at the site, which revealed lead contamination in both site soil and creek sediments. EPA found nearly a dozen severely deteriorated drums, tens of cubic yards of industrial hoses, and contaminated soil. Industrial hoses and drum remains were also found on the creek bank.

In March, 2000 EPA began a cleanup at the site, removing an estimated 1,000 tons of soil and sediment, as well as several truckloads of industrial hoses and other debris. A soil cap was placed on a portion of the site to eliminate contact with contaminated soils below.

The Complaint seeks recovery of the costs expended by EPA in the cleanup, which exceeded \$3.7 million, according to United States Attorney Connolly. Mr. Connolly stated, “We take very seriously our obligation to enforce the laws protecting our environment. When the contamination at the 12th street site was brought to our attention, EPA acted immediately and effectively to clean it up. Now it’s time for those responsible under the law to repay to the Government the cost of that cleanup, with interest.”

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