



Environmental News

For more information contact the Office of External Affairs at (214) 665-2200

January 17, 2006

EPA and Texas Declare Seaholm Property “Ready for Reuse”

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) issued the first Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) “ready for reuse” determination in the nation to Austin Energy’s Seaholm Power Plant.

The “ready for reuse” determination verifies that environmental conditions at the property are protective of human health and the environment for its future use as a commercial or residential mixed-use property and cultural attraction.

“Today’s announcement highlights our newest program to promote the reuse of formerly used industrial properties,” said Carl Edlund, EPA Region 6 Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division Director. “We are building on our experience using the enormously successful Brownfields program. Our ‘ready for reuse’ determinations clear the way for reuse of valuable natural resources by providing necessary encouragement and assurances to developers.”

A “ready for reuse” determination provides, in a straightforward manner, specific information about a site, including the nature and extent of contamination, the cleanup work performed (if needed), and the status of the property with respect to state and federal requirements.

TCEQ Chairman Kathleen Hartnett White stated, “The ‘ready for reuse’ designation of Seaholm Power plant is a milestone in the redevelopment of a formerly contaminated site. Once again, the City of Austin has demonstrated its commitment to good environmental stewardship. Austin Energy is commended for implementing a new type of remedy that enabled a historic site to be preserved for future generations to enjoy.”

Seaholm Power Plant, built between 1950 and 1958, produced 120 megawatts of electricity when it was fully functional. Austin Energy began decommissioning the facility in 2000. Contaminants that required addressing included asbestos, lead-based paint, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) federally-regulated under TSCA. Austin Energy has investigated and remediated the property in full compliance with EPA and TCEQ requirements, establishing the site as safe for its planned reuse.

Recently, the Texas Council of Engineering Companies awarded the Seaholm project a gold medal in the Environmental Division of their 2006 Engineering Excellence Awards. The award proposal, submitted by URS Corporation, showcased an innovative approach to containing PCBs that enabled Austin Energy to fulfill EPA’s cleanup requirements while maintaining the structural integrity of this historic building, which has over 110,000 square feet of useable floor area. The project will now compete in the American Council of Engineering Companies’ national competition this spring.

EPA and Texas Declare Seaholm Property “Ready for Reuse”

“Austin has long anticipated the Seaholm property's redevelopment," proclaimed Austin Mayor Will Wynn. "With this first-of-its-kind 'ready for reuse' designation, we are well on our way to integrating this significant structure into our shared vision of a thriving Downtown Austin.”

More information about the Seaholm Power Plant “ready for reuse” determination is available at www.epa.gov/earth1r6/ready4reuse.

-###-