

12/12/18 Email:

Thank you for your email regarding the Hanson Aggregates PA, LLC, Rock Hill Quarry operation in East Rockhill Township, Bucks County.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has taken and is continuing with various steps to ensure the quarry is operating in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment and is compliant with applicable statutes, regulations, and permits.

On December 5, 2018, upon receiving notification from Hanson of a positive asbestos test result, DEP immediately ordered that Hanson cease all mining, rock crushing, sizing, and other related activities. The cessation will remain in effect until rescinded, in writing, by DEP.

While only a trace amount of asbestiform mineral was found in the sample, DEP is taking all necessary precautions and measures to thoroughly investigate. At this time, no asbestiform mineral is believed to have left the site or become airborne.

As part of its efforts to address concerns from the local community, DEP in January 2018 required an initial investigation for the presence of asbestiform minerals within the proposed mining area. Although that investigation did not uncover the presence of asbestiform minerals, DEP required additional investigations and sampling for asbestiform minerals prior to the mining of any new areas. The sampling strategy was biased toward targeting the most likely locations to find asbestiform minerals. All investigations prior to the most recent one (a total of 14 in 2018) did not indicate the presence of asbestiform minerals. As part of those investigations, 21 composite drill cutting samples and 5 hand samples were collected and analyzed, with only the one positive asbestos analysis.

On Wednesday, December 5, Hanson notified DEP of a positive analysis for fibrous asbestos, at which time DEP ordered that Hanson cease all mining, rock crushing, sizing, and other related activities at the quarry. DEP has requested a letter from the operator outlining the most recent sampling and positive asbestos analysis, what additional investigation(s) the operator will perform to address the recent positive asbestos test results, and an evaluation of the potential for additional asbestiform minerals to be present at the site. A meeting between DEP and Hanson is scheduled for this week.

DEP will also be reassessing the asbestiform mineral evaluation process to determine whether additional studies or exploratory work can be undertaken to determine if asbestiform minerals and actual asbestos are present in other areas of the site.

DEP is also requesting an asbestos dust mitigation plan as part of the Air Quality Plan Approval that was recently issued for an on-site rock crusher. This plan should enhance the current fugitive dust and particulate matter control measures utilized at the site and will further ensure to the maximum extent possible that no dust or particulate matter leaves the site. Additionally, prior to lifting the cessation and allowing any mining or crushing related activities at the site, DEP is requiring implementation of an asbestos air monitoring and sampling plan around the entire perimeter of the quarry.

We appreciate your patience as we continue our investigation at the site. Questions and concerns can be directed to the Pottsville District Mining Office at RA-EPMining@pa.gov