

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Secretary Granholm:

The residents of my state are suffering from ongoing radioactive contamination. That contamination was caused by the government's Manhattan Project efforts, and it has never been properly cleaned up. Instead of active remedies, the government now relies on a strategy of "monitored natural attenuation"—essentially, hoping the problem corrects itself.

We know now that current measures are not enough. And your Department has been aware of the problem for years. On May 27, 2021, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources submitted extensive comments on the Department's Weldon Spring Site Draft Sixth Five-Year Review. That review—which was prescribed by Section 121 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986—aimed to analyze the state of contamination at the Weldon Spring site.

In those comments, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources identified serious sampling deficiencies in the Department's remediation plan. Among them:

- The unweathered zone for uranium, northwest of monitoring well 4043, was insufficiently defined. An additional Burlington-Keokuk monitoring well should be placed in this region, with its location determined by a geophysical survey using electrical resistivity tomography and multichannel analysis of surface waves.
- The sampling of the Burlington-Keokuk Limestone bedrock was insufficient. Additional sampling locations are required to properly account for vertical and lateral contaminant distribution.
- Insufficient monitoring sites were present within the monitoring well network in the area of the Chemical Plant.
- The sampling of uranium content in the Femme Osage Slough was based on 1997 data, not current data. As a result, stakeholders have no way of knowing whether radiation levels in this area remain within acceptable parameters.

- Existing monitoring wells were not sampling at the same depth level—one well was monitoring 47-52 feet below ground level, while others were monitoring at 77-97 and 95-105 feet below ground level. Accordingly, more monitoring wells are needed to ensure consistency.

DOE must immediately take steps to conduct additional sampling in this area, including through the establishment of additional monitoring sites, pursuant to the detailed request provided by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, please provide the following information by August 15, 2023.

1. Since 2021, has DOE taken any steps to revise its remediation strategy for the Weldon Spring site in light of these comments from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources?
2. Please provide an estimate of the projected cost of expanding sampling measures consistent with the recommendations of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. The residents of St. Louis and its surrounding communities deserve justice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

Josh Hawley
United States Senator