

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

March 5, 2024

Scott A. Spellmon
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Andy J. Pannier
Colonel, U.S. Army
1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, MO 63103-2833

General Spellmon and Colonel Pannier,

Decades of radioactive contamination have devastated the Coldwater Creek region of St. Louis. And this week witnessed yet another nightmare scenario: your disclosure that this contamination may extend **beneath residents' homes**. Residents are rightly horrified by the possibility that their homes are built atop radioactive waste—waste which should never have been there in the first place. USACE assumed jurisdiction of the area in 1997. Why has it taken so long for you to disclose this risk?

Your latest confirmation of new sampling activities in a subdivision with an “old creek meander” that was “covered up with fill” is alarming. Your office now says the contamination is buried deep enough it may not been a problem. That is no answer. We have no idea about the true extent of the risk, not least because you have refused for years to undertake needed testing in and around homes.

Until now, USACE has confined its testing to the historic 10-year floodplain around Coldwater Creek. I have repeatedly raised concerns that this testing plan is too narrow. Now we have confirmation. More comprehensive testing and remediation is obviously merited and immediately necessary. You must begin your new investigations without delay—and you must tell members of the community about anything else you’ve kept from public view.

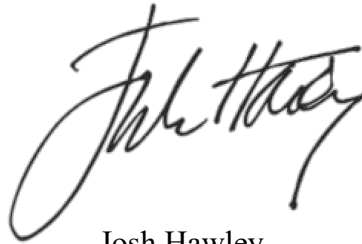
As for clean up, you have stated that remediation activities will take place within a year. That is far too long a wait. This timeline must be expedited and should begin immediately.

To provide some transparency to the community, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Why did USACE—St. Louis District not previously prioritize testing these residential properties along Coldwater Creek?

2. When was USACE made aware of the contamination you announced publicly on March 4, 2024? And how much time elapsed before you informed residents of the risk?
3. Are there potentially more contaminated residential properties along Coldwater Creek that USACE has not yet tested but have identified as a potential risk?
4. If so, when will testing of all residential properties be complete?
5. Is the contamination on these residential properties a health hazard for those who live in or visit the properties? What sampling are you conducting to confirm this?
6. Are there other areas outside the 10-year floodplain that USACE plans to test?
7. Are there other areas of potential contamination outside the 10-year floodplain—old meanders of the creek, locations filled with dirt from the creek, etc.—that USACE does not plan to test?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator