

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

July 14, 2023

Lieutenant General Scott Spellmon
United States Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Lieutenant General Spellmon,

New reports detail a decades-long effort to downplay and conceal the risks of radioactive contamination in St. Louis, Missouri.¹ The details of the report are appalling. Despite knowing of contamination at the St. Louis airport as early as 1976, the federal government concealed it from the public until 1990, almost 25 years. During that time, the contamination was leaking, spreading into nearby Coldwater Creek. Even worse, the report documents similar behavior continuing into the present.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers has spent the last year ignoring calls to conduct testing for radioactive contamination at St. Louis schools. Your excuse has been that USACE already knows the location of the contamination. It is now clear how ridiculous those statements are; the government's efforts to track contamination in St. Louis have been nonchalant, even negligent.

The allegations in this report require that you revisit your refusal to conduct further testing of the Hazelwood School District. The people of St. Louis have a right to know the full extent of radioactive contamination in their community. The government cannot continue to hide behind claims that it has competently tracked this deadly contamination. To that end, please provide my office with answers to the following questions:

1. Based on USACE's testing, how much contaminated material leaked from the St. Louis Airport site between 1976, when the government discovered the leak, and 1990, when it was disclosed to the public?
2. In light of the allegations of negligent tracking and remediation contained in this report, does USACE intend to revisit its refusal to conduct additional testing of Hazelwood School District?

¹ Michael Phillips and Jim Salter, *How America's push for the atomic bomb spawned enduring radioactive waste problems in St. Louis*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (July 12, 2023) <https://apnews.com/article/nuclear-waste-cancer-st-louis-army-corps-school-9e1ceb765822fc53fcbc2e42005adef2>; Allison Kite, *Records reveal 75 years of government downplaying, ignoring risks of St. Louis radioactive waste*, THE MISSOURI INDEPENDENT (July 12, 2023) <https://missouriindependent.com/2023/07/12/st-louis-radioactive-waste-records/>.

3. In light of the allegations in this report, can USACE state with confidence that there is no radioactive contamination at any Hazelwood School District property other than Jana Elementary?

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