



For Immediate Release  
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## **AGENCIES: REPORT RELEASED TODAY ON ILLINOIS BEACH STATE PARK**

Chicago -- The University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health has released the Final Report of Findings on Illinois Beach State Park (IBSP): Determination of Asbestos Contamination in Beach Nourishment Sand.

An environmental consulting firm, United Analytical Services, Inc., obtained sand samples from seven locations and analyzed them for asbestos. UIC environmental health professionals reviewed these results and conducted a type of risk assessment, known as a Screening Risk Assessment, of proposed sources of beach nourishment sand for IBSP (i.e., North Point Marina and the Approach Channel to Waukegan Harbor) and the North and South Unit beaches at IBSP to determine whether they pose an unacceptable risk to visitors to the IBSP. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) standard for excess cancer risks are generally less than one cancer in 10,000 persons ( $1.0 \times 10^{-4}$ ) to one cancer in 1,000,000 persons ( $1.0 \times 10^{-6}$ ).

UIC noted that the asbestos level in samples from the IBSP -- South Unit (the most popular beach) is statistically similar to the beaches that were sampled for comparison purposes (a/k/a background). As a result, UIC concluded that IBSP -- South Unit was not an area of concern. Conversely, IBSP -- North Unit, and the two sand nourishment source areas -- North Point Marina and the Approach Channel to Waukegan Harbor, have asbestos levels statistically higher than the samples taken from "background" beaches. UIC focused its Screening Risk Assessment on these three areas. UIC concluded:

"This screening risk estimate, using conservative (protective) worst-case assumptions, indicates risk levels that are less than the U.S. EPA level of one in one million excess cancer risk (by factors ranging from > 1000 for average or typical exposures to 6-40 for reasonable maximum estimates). This indicates that the true cancer risks to beach users at IBSP are less than the standard range of acceptable risk. It also indicates that nourishment sand from the North Point Marina and the Approach Channel to Waukegan Harbor, if applied to the beach, would not raise the risk above the U.S. EPA level of one in one million excess cancer risk". (Page 50)

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The Final Report is consistent with three separate previous studies, which have all found no significant public health threat at IBSP due to asbestos exposure:

(1) On May 15, 1998, Illinois Department of Public Health Director John Lumpkin, M.D., concluded that IBSP “is safe for public use” after asbestos sampling of the water, sand and air was conducted by an environmental contractor.

(2) On June 16, 2000, the IDPH, along with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) issued a Public Health Assessment for IBSP, which concluded that the “information available indicates that no apparent public health hazard exists related to asbestos contamination at Illinois Beach State Park.”

(3) On August 1, 2003, scientists at ATSDR and IDPH reviewed extensive data from air monitoring for asbestos conducted during June and July, 2003, in two areas near the Midwest Generation fishing pier located near the south end of IBSP, and concluded that, “[b]ased on the sampling results, there does not appear to be a public health hazard from asbestos containing material (ACM) at these two sites.”

On July 2, 2003, Madigan created a task force to coordinate the efforts of the various federal, state, county and municipal governments and agencies that may be involved in ensuring public safety at IBSP and in reviewing charges of unsafe asbestos levels at Illinois Beach State Park. ACM has been encountered along the 6.5 miles of IBSP since at least 1998.

Task force members include the U.S. EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the City of Waukegan, the Waukegan Park District, the Lake County State’s Attorney’s Office and the Attorney General’s Office.

On June 16, 2005, UIC issued its Interim Report of Findings on Illinois Beach State Park. It thereafter received detailed comments from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. The Final Report issued today incorporates UIC’s responses to the ATSDR comments. While making numerous detailed technical comments, ATSDR concluded that it “generally agreed with the conclusions that asbestos exposure does not appear to pose a public health hazard, assuming that the program to immediately remove visible asbestos containing material is in place.”<sup>1</sup>

The Final Report provides four recommendations to assist in continuing to minimize potential human exposure to ACM:

- 1) A continuation and expansion of beach surveillance for, and pick-up of, ACM at IBSP that would include additional surveillance after inclement high wind and wave events and detailed record keeping of ACM findings and descriptions.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Dr. Mark D. Johnson, Senior Environmental Health Scientist, ATSDR, to Mr. Salvatore Cali, Senior Industrial Hygienist, UIC, dated September 28, 2005.

- 2) A review of IBSP visitor education efforts about ACM to determine effectiveness.
- 3) An ACM survey of areas that are impacted by erosion for the remains of housing infrastructure. If infrastructure that includes ACM is found, it should be remediated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations for asbestos abatement.
- 4) Exploration of other options for long-term beach nourishment and erosion management.

“I appreciate the efforts of all Task Force members and those of the doctors and medical professionals at UIC and ATSDR. These recommendations are important to the continued assurance that IBSP is an environmentally safe area for the public to visit. I look for IDNR to fully implement these recommendations.” Madigan said.

“The Task Force report is a well researched and scientifically sound document,” said IEPA Director Doug Scott. “IEPA supports the findings and recommendations of the Task Force Report. I commend the Attorney General for her diligence in seeing that this report was completed so professionally.”

“The Illinois Department of Public Health works to ensure that all Illinois beaches are safe for the public and we believe this study concludes that the water, air and sand at Illinois Beach State Park are safe for public use,” said Dr. Eric E. Whitaker, Illinois Department of Public Health Director.

“The Department of Natural Resources is committed to providing a safe place for our visitors and staff. This report supports our position that Illinois Beach State Park is safe for the public. We appreciate all of the effort that went into this study, and will continue to work closely with the Attorney General’s task force and member agencies to ensure that these recommendations are being met,” said Sam Flood, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

All of the state and federal agencies involved in the task force support the recommendations.

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