

New Zealand Contaminated Land update

Ministry for the Environment

The Ministry has additional contaminated land resources and is developing a plan to progress new work and update guidelines. Since the last working group meeting, the New Zealand Ministry for the Environment has:

- Almost completed updates to two of our Contaminated Land Management Guidelines (CLMG). CLMG #1 & 5, which address reporting on contaminated land in New Zealand and the investigation of contaminated land are to be released shortly on our website.
- Developed guidance for regulators to assist with the identification of Hazardous Activity and Industry List (HAIL) sites. The HAIL is a list of activities and industries that have potential to cause contamination of land and water. Identifying the HAIL sites is powerful tool for ensure that contaminated sites are addressed at the time there are developed or redeveloped. It is hoped that we will be able to release a draft in the next six months.

The Ministry is currently working on prioritising the work areas we propose to advance over the next twelve months. Possibilities for this work include:

- A contaminated land strategy – a roadmap that clearly indicates the direction the Government want New Zealand to take with contaminated land and sets the expectations for regulators and other stakeholders.
- updates to our remaining three CLMGs – environmental guideline values, risk ranking tool, and the management of information on contaminated land
- Bioavailability /bio-accessibility guidance, how and where this methodology can be used
- X-Ray Fluorescence guidance, how and where this technology can be used.

Other government agencies

Regional councils and the Department of Conservation (DOC) have developed tools that use national level geographic information systems (GIS) environmental information and the regional council's contaminated land databases to assess the risks to landfills or the risks from contaminated sites.

The regional council's tool looks to assess the risks posed by climate change (coastal inundation and flooding) to current and historic landfills. The purpose of the tool is to consistently rank the landfills in their regions, to facilitate the prioritisation of funding and resources to the most vulnerable landfills nationally.

DOC developed their contaminated sites tool to help them understand the risks that the contaminated sites on their estate posed to health and the environment. The sites have been ranked and this ranking is being used prioritise the high-risk sites for investigation and where necessary remediation.

A question to the Working Group:

How do the other member's countries address the issue were companies go into receivership and leave significant environmental liabilities for central and local government to address? Whilst this is

not an emerging issue in New Zealand, the scale of the environmental liabilities appear to be increasing.