



# Joint News Release



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## **Haines Fairbanks Pipeline Study Results** **Search for traces of dioxin along route finds no contamination**

**Anchorage—January 30, 2004--**Results of a joint investigation along the route of an old military fuel pipeline between Fairbanks and Haines indicate negligible levels of dioxin contamination in the soil. Dioxins are cancer-causing and long-lasting chemicals associated with some herbicides used in the past. The investigation focused on the 50-foot wide right-of-way along the 334-mile portion of the pipeline route through Alaska.

“Neither residual herbicides, nor herbicide related dioxin were detected in any of the samples taken,” said Rich Jackson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Dioxins were below State cleanup levels at all sampling locations. The Corps conducted the investigation under its program to clean up Formerly Used Defense Sites.

The Corps began the investigation after DEC obtained correspondence in late 2002 inferring that Esteron may have been used to control brush along the pipeline right-of-way in Alaska. DEC asked the Corps of Engineers to determine if there is a risk to the public from dioxin or other constituents associated with herbicide use along the right-of-way. The Corps responded quickly, beginning with a search of archives for the types, locations, and quantities of herbicides used.

As part of the investigation, the Corps performed a search for old records for documentation on dioxin-containing herbicide use along the pipeline. Based on this information the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation conducted its own records search. “Ours was an extensive effort to find any paper trail from the ordering, shipment, storage or use of Esteron Brush Killer or other dioxin contaminated herbicide along the pipeline,” said Bob Glascott, project manager for DEC.

High priority sites for sampling were near gardens, areas used for subsistence food gathering and recreation, and other places important to a community. Locations with the least possible amount of soil disturbance were chosen, because dioxin binds tightly to organic material. Sampling locations were relatively equally spaced along the former pipeline route, and were selected primarily in areas where old military planning documents stated that herbicides would be applied.

“We want to thank members of the public for contacting us during this project.” said Jackson. The agencies held public meetings in Tok, Fairbanks, and Haines, and met with stakeholder agencies during development of the sampling plan.

The Corps collected all samples by October 23, 2003, with DEC oversight. The results were analyzed by an experienced laboratory and received rigorous third-party validation to confirm their accuracy.

Esteron, now banned, was sometimes contaminated with dioxin. The manufacturing process of the ingredient 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid, or “2,4,5-T,” sometimes introduced dioxin into the herbicide. Use of the chemical and the herbicide has been banned in the United States since 1983.

The term “dioxin” refers to about 75 closely related compounds. Dioxins decompose very slowly in the environment and are suspected carcinogens. The dioxin specific to Esteron can be distinguished in a laboratory from other forms, such as those created during campfires, forest fires, industrial incineration, household-trash burning.

The Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline was used by the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1973 to convey petroleum products from the port of Haines to Fort Greely, Eielson Air Force Base, and Fort Wainwright, in Interior Alaska. The eight-inch pipeline’s route followed the Haines Highway to Haines Junction, Yukon Territory, then along the Alaska Highway to Delta Junction and Fort Wainwright, Fairbanks.

The results of this investigation have been published in a report produced by the Corps of Engineers that can be downloaded from:

**[www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/csp/sites/haines\\_fair\\_pipe.htm](http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/csp/sites/haines_fair_pipe.htm)** This site also contains other information about the Haines-Fairbanks project.

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