

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Lee M. Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Administrator Zeldin:

We write to share our strong support for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA's) designation of the J.H. Baxter site in Eugene, Oregon, as a Superfund site on the National Priorities List (NPL). Final listing of the J.H. Baxter site on the NPL will allow for a timely and comprehensive cleanup of chemical contaminants at the site and in the surrounding community.

For nearly 80 years, the company J.H. Baxter treated wood products at a 35-acre facility in West Eugene, Oregon. Hazardous substances and classified probable carcinogens, including creosote and pentachlorophenol (PCP), were often used to treat wood products before J.H. Baxter ceased operations January 2022. Despite a halt in operations, toxic contamination remained on site, contaminating soil and groundwater at the former facility and in the surrounding community.

Following the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) sampling of the surrounding community in 2021, the state found elevated levels of dioxins – widening the original scope of response efforts. DEQ has started the work to cleanup properties with the highest levels of dioxins, but more work remains to be completed.

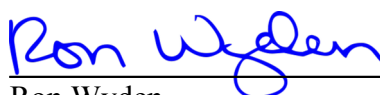
Through authority granted to EPA under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Cleanup and Liability Act, EPA has the power to prioritize sites for cleanup and remediation, an action that is desperately needed to address the legacy contamination at the J.H. Baxter site and neighboring communities. Should the site be added to the NPL, EPA will ensure that the appropriate resources and expertise are dedicated to address the full scope of contamination and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to evaluate, remove, and remediate hazardous substances in order to safeguard public and environmental health.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We appreciate the EPA's partnership and transparency with our state and local partners to address this legacy contamination. Please do not hesitate to contact our staff, Hanna Sweet at Hanna_Sweet@merkley.senate.gov, Jacob Buckner at Jacob_Buckner@wyden.senate.gov, and Olivia Wilhite at Olivia.Wilhite@mail.house.gov should you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress