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September 11, 2023

Dear Representative Ryan,

We write to update you on the work that we have undertaken to test the Verizon sites mentioned in the Wall Street Journal articles on the use of lead-sheathed cables in the telecommunications industry. We are pleased to report that our test results at the Wappingers Falls location in your district are consistent with those found by New York State: soil lead levels near Verizon's cable there are similar to lead levels in the surrounding area (i.e., background levels) and do not pose a public health risk to your constituents.¹ Similarly, our test results in West Orange, New Jersey are also consistent with the Environmental Protection Agency's findings in that location.² The results are explained in more detail below, as are similar results from a third Verizon location mentioned in the articles.

We have not deployed lead-sheathed cables for decades, but their existence, both in the telecommunications industry and in the transportation and power industries, has long been known. We were skeptical of the claims in the Wall Street Journal, but took them seriously because we prioritize the health and safety of our communities and our workforce.

Recognizing the importance of a careful, scientific approach to this issue, we engaged third-party experts to develop and conduct a protocol to test the levels of lead in the soil in the vicinity of the cables highlighted by the Wall Street Journal. The protocol included collecting and testing discrete soil samples, within a set of soil sampling units. The third-party experts also used a technique to estimate average soil lead levels in the area; that technique, referred to as an incremental sampling methodology, collects multiple samples across the individual sampling units and then combines, processes, and tests the consolidated soil sample to yield estimates of the average soil lead level. Taking this extra step helps understand the soil lead level of an area in a practical sense, as the nature and weight of lead means it is not evenly distributed across a given area. This methodology provides information about lead levels across a larger area than discrete soil samples, so it provides a more reliable measure of potential human exposure.

The results of these tests for each of the three Verizon locations mentioned in the Wall Street Journal articles are summarized below:

Wappingers Falls, New York

The findings of Verizon's investigation conducted at Wappingers Falls, New York are consistent with the New York State Department of Health's conclusion that soil lead levels near Verizon's cable in Temple Park are generally similar to lead levels in background samples and do not pose a public health risk. At each location tested at Wappingers Falls, the average soil lead

¹ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-temple-park-will-reopen-after-comprehensive-soil-testing-reveals>

² https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=16176

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level is lower than the residential soil lead threshold levels of 400 mg/kg set by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. And at three of the four sampling units nearest to the lead sheathed cable, the average lead concentration in soil is less than or equal to background lead levels at that location.

Coal Center, Pennsylvania

Testing of the Coal Center location found that the average soil lead level is lower than the soil-to-groundwater remediation standard of 450 mg/kg and soil remediation standard of 500 mg/kg set by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. And at all five sampling units located within ten feet of lead sheathed cables, the average lead concentration in soil was within the range of background levels at this location.

West Orange, New Jersey

Testing of the West Orange, New Jersey location found that the average soil lead level is lower than the soil remediation standard of 400 mg/kg set by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The testing results also demonstrated that soil lead concentrations from 8 out of 9 incremental sampling methodology samples collected at the site are below the New Jersey soil lead remediation standard. And at all four sampling units located within 10 feet of lead sheathed cables, the average lead concentration is within the range of background levels. These results are consistent with sampling conducted at the location by the EPA, which concluded that its review of data “indicate that there are no immediate threats to the health of people nearby.”

We provided these testing results to the EPA and state environmental agencies and will continue to work closely with them to determine if further testing is required. We will continue to be guided by science and our commitment to the health and safety of our communities and workforce. We appreciate your interest in this important issue, and would be happy to discuss our efforts on it with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

