



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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**FINAL RESULTS ARE IN:  
SOIL SAMPLES ASSOCIATED WITH WAULECO'S PAST WOOD BURNING  
ACTIVITIES SHOW DIOXIN LEVELS WELL WITHIN STATE STANDARDS**

**WAUSAU, Wis.**—In a final site investigation report concerning past wood burning which was submitted by Wauleco, Inc. to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) today, it was concluded that historic wood waste burning practices by the company did not generate contaminants that exceeded state standards.

Sampling was requested by the WDNR earlier this year to determine if soil near Wauleco's site at 125 E. Rosecrans in Wausau contained dioxins resulting from wood waste burning that was curtailed nearly 50 years ago. Wauleco's internal review of historical records revealed that most of the wood burned was kiln-dried lumber and shavings/sawdust that was not surface coated with wood preservatives. Burning untreated wood would have resulted in fewer products of incomplete combustion, such as dioxins. Wauleco's review of internal documents also confirmed that the WDNR was aware of Wauleco's use of wood to fuel one of its boilers and issued a permit covering the operation.

In addition to Wauleco, the WDNR has made similar requests for information from three other entities in the neighborhood that also operated incinerators or smokestacks at a time when it was standard practice.

The WDNR approved Wauleco's work plan for soil sampling in May. The 36 locations chosen for the sampling were based on Wauleco's wind dispersal analysis, which allowed the company to target the areas that would most likely have been affected by its historic wood waste burning activities. Ten

of the 36 samples were collected from these areas. However, because dioxins can be found throughout the environment and can come from numerous sources, additional sample areas outside the target areas were recommended by Wauleco, and approved by the WDNR, to identify “background” conditions, meaning conditions that exist regardless of Wauleco’s wood waste burning. Five of these background samples exceeded state standards, though all five are not attributable to Wauleco’s wood burning. Those samples include the railroad corridor, vehicular traffic, and other areas that would typically be potential locations of backyard burning activities.

State toxicologists previously concluded that there is no apparent health hazard at Riverside Park and in the Thomas Street area based on the results of soil samples taken previously by others, but also recommended additional sampling be performed. The City has indicated it will ask those same state health experts to analyze this new data.

The final report, as submitted on October 29, 2019, along with additional information on Wauleco’s environmental clean-up efforts, can be found at [www.wauleco.com](http://www.wauleco.com).

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