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MTBE Cleanup Estimated to Cost \$1 to 3 Billion

New study better quantifies anticipated cleanup costs

Amherst, MA (<u>PRWEB</u>) May 20, 2005 -- In an announcement today, the Association for Environmental Health and Sciences (AEHS), Amherst, Mass., discusses the recent efforts to quantify the costs associated with remediation of leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites where the fuel oxygenate MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether) is present.

AEHS is an organization of multidisciplinary, environmental professionals and was created to facilitate communication and foster cooperation among those concerned with soil protection and cleanup. AEHS is devoted to enhancing the flow of information between the regulatory and regulated communities; scientists and non-scientists, theoreticians and practitioners; and the public and private sectors.

Many studies have been done over the past decade to estimate MTBE cleanup costs, but few have been comprehensive in scope or transparent in methodology. The interest in quantifying potential costs has been driven by the draft Energy Policy Act legislation (Energy Bill), which includes a provision for public funding of cleanup at sites impacted by MTBE.

ENSR International, Westford, Mass., is researching and preparing a study, soon to be released, which will fully outline the national remediation costs associated with MTBE.

By trending the EPA confirmed release data for the past 20 years, evaluating the history of nationwide cleanup costs, and then incorporating forecasts for streamlined technologies and cleanup methods, a national total cost of MTBE remediation over the coming 30 years is predicted to be in the range of \$1 to \$3 billion.

According to the EPA LUST Trust Fund, an estimated 4% of LUST cases have no identifiable responsible party, which will require public funding for cleanup. From this information, one can project that public liability for the future expense of MTBE cleanup could be approximately 4% of this projected total \$1 to \$3 billion, or \$40 to \$150 million.

MTBE has been present in gasoline as an octane booster since 1979. With the passage of the Clean Air Act of 1990, use and concentration of MTBE in gasoline increased during the 1990s to meet the requirements for refiners to produce oxygenated fuel, which burns cleaner and reduces tailpipe emissions of ozone precursors. Since the 1990s, other oxygenates have been introduced, which has reduced the percentage of gasoline that contains MTBE.

The new study by ENSR International is due to be published in part through RemediationWeekly.com, and in the AEHS newsletter, The Matrix. Publication is expected in early summer.

ENSR International is a full-service global provider of environmental and energy services to industry and government. ENSR's 1,600 professionals provide consulting, engineering and remediation from 70 worldwide locations, including 45 in the U.S. Over its 35-year history, ENSR has successfully executed 75,000 environmental projects. Clients include some of the world s largest water supply companies, as well as dozens of major petroleum companies, whom the company has assisted with investigation, design and remediation at thousands of sites across the U.S. and around the world.



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