

Libby Area Technical Assistant Group, Inc.
PO Box 53
Libby, MT 59923

May 6, 2014


Dear Rebecca,

It is well known that trees located in areas surrounding the abandoned mine both within and outside OU3 have accumulated amphibole fibers in their bark. Studies conducted by the University of Montana and Montana Tech have shown that when these contaminated trees are disturbed through firewood harvesting practices, inhalation exposures can occur. Their team has also shown that when LA-contaminated firewood is combusted in a wood stove, fibers are released into the ambient air. More importantly, the majority of the amphibole fibers remain in the ash post combustion, leading to potential (and ongoing) in-home exposures. Taken together, these findings are significant because wood stoves are the primary source of residential heating in Libby and throughout northwest Montana during the cold winter months.

The TAG would like to make a formal request to EPA in an effort to understand what has been done to address this concern within the town of Libby. Specifically, the TAG is interested in EPA's work to date towards addressing the following questions:

- What is the extent of amphibole-contaminated trees throughout the Libby area?
- Do people generally harvest firewood in these areas?
- Are there protections in place to eliminate exposures within these forested areas?
- How prevalent is the burning of contaminated firewood throughout Libby?
- Has any wood pile testing or home surveying been conducted within Libby?
- Have any wood stove ash samples been collected within residences to address this issue?
- What is EPA's long term strategy in dealing with this issue?
- Are there plans to include the Asbestos Resource Program in dealing with this concern?

Thanks in advance for the timely response to our request.


Mike Noble
Chairman, LATAG