

the *Dallas Morning News* on December 2, 2015. Energy Future Holdings settlement with the EPA comes as part of a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department, which filed an objection to the company's bankruptcy plans last summer claiming that Energy Future Holdings was trying to skirt its environmental responsibilities, according to the news report. An Energy Future Holdings subsidiary that has since closed extracted uranium from four mines in McKinley County, N.M., in the 1970s and 1980s. The EPA, which estimates the cost of cleanup at \$23 million, found uranium contamination was still present at the mine sites decades later.

● The Environmental Protection Agency announced on December 31, 2015, that an isolation barrier at the West Lake Landfill near St. Louis, Mo., will be installed to prevent subsurface smoldering from reaching radiologically contaminated areas of the Superfund site. The construction of the physical isolation barrier will be carried out under the direction and oversight of the EPA with support from the Army Corps of Engineers. According to the EPA, additional engineering controls will be used at the site, where a subsurface fire was detected in 2010. Additional controls include the installation of cooling loops to prevent potential impacts that could result if the smoldering were to come into contact with the radioactive materials contained in the landfill. The EPA said that it will release additional information, such as the location of the barrier, once plans are finalized.

On February 2, the U.S. Senate passed a bill that would

transfer remediation authority over the West Lake Landfill from the EPA to the Army Corps of Engineers, putting the site in the Corps' Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program. U.S. Sens. Claire McCaskill (D., Mo.) and Roy Blunt (R., Mo.) introduced the bill, while companion legislation was introduced in the House by U.S. Reps. Lacy Clay (D., Mo.) and Ann Wagner (R., Mo.). Residents near the landfill and state officials have long sought to move oversight of the landfill cleanup away from the EPA.

DOE

Hoping to conduct a deep borehole field test in North Dakota, the Department of Energy announced on January 5 that it has selected a Battelle-led team to drill a test borehole more than 16,000 feet deep into a crystalline basement rock formation near Rugby, N.D. The DOE is conducting research into the potential use of deep boreholes for the disposal of certain types of high-level radioactive waste. According to the DOE, the field test will provide insights into crosscutting subsurface science and engineering challenges such as drilling techniques, wellbore stability and sealing, and subsurface characterization. Determining the feasibility of deep borehole disposal is the goal of the DOE's estimated \$35-million, five-year project on approximately 20 acres of state-owned land. The research will examine the

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