

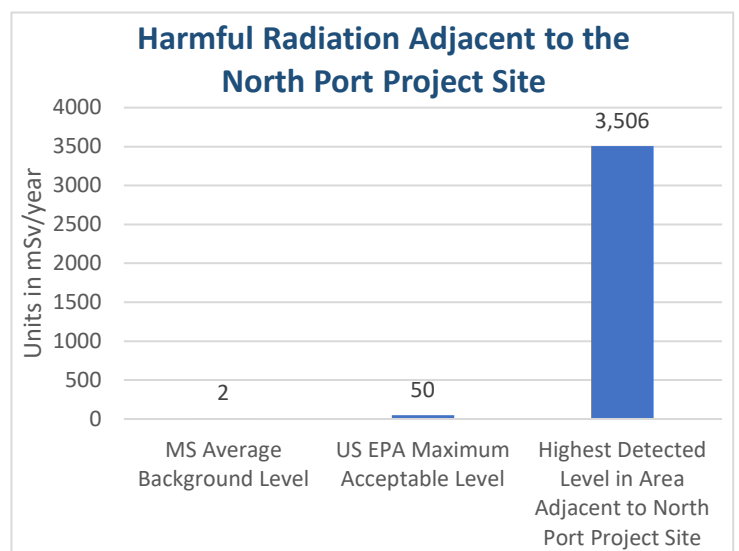


Community Action Alert

On **February 9, 2021 at 9:00 am**, a hearing will be held on a case brought by EEECHO and North Gulfport Community Land Trust. This case involves a permit issued by the MS Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to the MS Port Authority for the proposed North Port Project site. See details below to attend this hearing in person or online.

The [Deep South Center for Environmental Justice](#) is assisting EEECHO in this case with expert witnesses who conducted an environmental assessment of the North Port Project site in January 2020. Dr. Earthea Nance and Dr. David Padgett have filed testimony which detail the following environmental hazards on the site that are risks for nearby communities.

- The North Port Project site, located at 33rd Street and 34th Avenue, is near Black residential neighborhoods. This site was the location of the Gulfport Fertilizer Company whose operations began in 1904 with several decades of industrial activities. As a result, the site is contaminated with toxins.
- There has been no environmental remediation or removal of contaminated soil on the North Port Project site.
- At the time of the environmental assessment conducted in January 2020, the North Port Project site was not secured by fencing and posted warning signs to prevent children, adults, and animals from entering the site and being exposed to contamination.
- No monitoring wells that can detect the presence of contaminants are set up in the residential neighborhoods around the North Port Project site.
- There are significant concentrations of lead and arsenic on the North Port Project site. There is the potential for these contaminants to be carried from the site in groundwater and stormwater runoff to drainage ditches and ground surfaces near homes and churches that children can access.
- The 2009 MDEQ Corrective Action Plan has a serious design flaw to send potentially contaminated water runoff from the North Port Project site to a bordering tributary that occasionally flows through residential neighborhoods into Turkey Creek.
- The MS Port Authority failed to comply with the MDEQ plan requirements for a clay cap to cover contaminated soil. The clay cap has been penetrated by years of tree and plant growth with roots that extend down through the clay and into the contaminated soil underneath. The cap is likely covered with cracks that means contaminants are not controlled.
- The MS Port Authority failed to comply with the MDEQ plan requirements for monitoring wells. The monitoring wells are to provide data on contaminants detected in the groundwater over time. These wells are unlabeled and lack individual identification, which comprises the data. The wells are in poor condition with rusted padlocks and have been allowed to be overgrown with vegetation that make them difficult to access. Access is prevented to one of the wells that is surrounded by deep water.
- There has been no study of the traffic impact from the MS Port Authority's proposed project. Increased vehicle traffic would worsen air quality for nearby Black neighborhoods where residents are already exposed to relatively high air pollution from current traffic. This pollution includes fine airborne particles, known as particulate matter (PM) 2.5, which are less than the width of a hair and can be inhaled deep into the lungs with damaging health effects, including heart attacks and premature death.
- Harmful levels of radiation have been detected adjacent to the North Port Project site that are more than significantly higher than the average background level in Mississippi and the US Environmental Protection Agency's maximum acceptable level (see below graph). The radiation levels are high enough to cause severe damage to human health, including cancer, if humans come into contact with it. The MDEQ has not studied how changing the use of the North Port Project site from vacant and unused for many years to full industrial use may cause this radiation to migrate into the surrounding area.



Hearing location: MDEQ Office, 515 Amite St. in Jackson.

To access the hearing (live) online, email EEECHO: eeecho@cableone.net.