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Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization Applauds EPA's Declaration of a Public Health Emergency in Asbestos-Laden Libby, Montana Area

Although Admittedly Overdue, Recognition Key to Improving Medical Care and Educational Resources for Residents

REDONDO BEACH, Calif. -- The Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO) today announced its support for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s declaration of a public health emergency at the Libby asbestos site in northwest Montana.

Hundreds of asbestos-related disease cases have been documented in the designated community, which covers the towns of Libby and Troy. This represents the first time EPA has made a determination under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) that conditions at a site constitute a public health emergency.

According to EPA's press release today, "This determination recognizes the serious impact to the public health from the contamination at Libby and underscores the need for further action and health care for area residents who have been or may be exposed to asbestos. Investigations performed by the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry have found the incidence of occurrence of asbestosis, a lung condition, in the Libby area staggeringly higher than the national average for the period from 1979-1998. EPA is working closely with the Department of Health and Human Services, which is making available a short-term grant to provide needed asbestos-related medical care to Libby and Troy residents."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson stated, "This is a tragic public health situation that has not received the recognition it deserves by the federal government for far too long. We're making a long-delayed commitment to the people of Libby and Troy. Based on a rigorous re-evaluation of the situation on the ground, we will continue to move aggressively on the cleanup efforts and protect the health of the people."

"Although the EPA's move to officially recognize the magnitude of the asbestos-related public health crisis is indeed long overdue, it is certainly welcome," said Linda Reinstein, Executive Director, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization. "Asbestos exposure continues to serve as the world's leading cause of cancer in the workplace and as we work to implement a full ban on asbestos, we must mutually work to provide care and resources for those who have been affected by this deadly mineral. We applaud Administrator Jackson and the EPA for taking this position and are hopeful that this will help not only spur support in the Libby area, but open eyes to the need for more resources for asbestos victims and their families across our nation and indeed, our world."

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About Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization

Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO) was founded by asbestos victims and their families in 2004. ADAO seeks to give asbestos victims and concerned citizens a united voice to help ensure that their rights are fairly represented and protected, while raising public awareness about the dangers of asbestos exposure and often deadly asbestos related diseases. ADAO is an independent volunteer organization. For more information visit www.asbestosdiseaseawareness.org.