

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE FOR RISK-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION OF SITES

Executive Summary

The Department of Environmental Quality is pleased to release this initial version of the Technical Guidance for Risk-Based Environmental Remediation of Sites. The provisions enacted in Session Law 2105-286 establish an expanded risk-based framework for making cleanup decisions at contaminated properties. This guidance is the culmination of significant work by members of the DEQ Remediation Team and it is intended to satisfy the mandates of the Session Law.

This guidance provides to the extent practicable, a common set of methods and standards for assessment and cleanup of contaminated sites. The risk-based approach described in this guidance hinges on the expectation that data density and the level of effort to assess a contaminated site can and should be a function of the complexity of a site's risks and its setting. The use of risk-based decision-making tools allows more freedom for setting and achieving cleanup levels, and at the same time increases the responsibility to thoroughly understand and assess potential receptors, exposure pathways, and risks posed by contaminants remaining in the environment. Selecting a risk-based remedy involves a balance between the level of certainty in understanding site conditions and the practicality of using land-use controls to manage risk where understanding of the site is limited. The ability to employ land-use controls to manage risks carries with it a responsibility to ensure that such controls are protective, achievable, sustainable, and consistent with surrounding land uses.

DEQ believes that the paradigm shift toward a risk-based approach to remediation presents an opportunity for state environmental cleanup programs to work collegially with remediating parties to develop remedial strategies that appropriately protect human health and the environment. Remediating parties are encouraged to communicate with their oversight program early in the process to discuss site conditions and ensure that the requirements are well understood.