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EPD to host public meeting on Symrise hazardous waste permit

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A public meeting this week will provide the community with an opportunity to learn about environmental conditions at a site with hazardous waste in Brunswick ahead of a public comment period.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division will host from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday a public meeting regarding its intent to issue a hazardous waste permit to Symrise, Inc.

The meeting will be held in-person in Room 111 of the Correll Building on the campus of College of Coastal Georgia in Brunswick. Attendees can also participate virtually via Zoom.

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Symrise, Inc., facilities are located near the port in Brunswick and have been in operation for many decades. A wastewater treatment area on site previously included underground storage tanks and pipes, which have corroded over the years, releasing chemicals into the soil and groundwater.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has taken cleanup actions at the site, but more is required. The EPA is now requiring a state permit to manage the clean up program moving forward.

The state has issued a notice that the hazardous waste permit will be issued.

The public meeting will be a chance for officials to share information about site conditions, contamination and cleanup plans.

“Some of the modeling that they have done shows that the groundwater contamination basically is under control, and it’s not migrating, and they have what we call a downward trend,” said Rachael Thompson, executive director of the Glynn Environmental Coalition, which requested the public meeting. “Basically the levels of contamination are decreasing naturally over time.”

A public comment period is open through Feb. 23, 2023.



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“The citizen comments have the ability to ensure that the monitoring and any cleanup is done in the manner that they believe is the most effective and most protective of our community and our environment,” Thompson said.

GEC hopes to understand more about the community’s concerns regarding this site, Thompson said, which will help determine their advocacy efforts.

“One of the important things that we’re kind of looking for is having a good picture of what the monitoring looks like and if that’s something that’s important for the general public, to maintain a high standard of groundwater monitoring,” she said.

Thompson encouraged the community to take advantage of the informational meeting and get involved.

“We’re grateful that they saw the value in having a public meeting for this site because really this is one of the first times that a public meeting has been held specifically around this groundwater issue,” she said.

Any hazardous waste has the potential to migrate and cause quality of life and health issues or to affect property values, Thompson said.

“It’s just really important that people know what’s happening and they have an opportunity to participate, and if they feel so inclined that they submit those comments,” she said.

Those who plan to participate virtually are asked to RSVP at <https://www.glynnenvironmental.org/events-1/public-meeting-symrise-hazardous-waste-permit>.



Lauren McDonald