



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

# Press Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2019

### UPDATE 3: IDEM and DNR responding to reported fish kill

**INDIANAPOLIS** - Based on two rounds of sampling conducted by the responsible party, ArcelorMittal, no in stream sample has exceeded the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The primary human health exposure pathway from this incident for cyanide is incidental ingestion.

Per a directive from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), ArcelorMittal increased sampling at its outfalls to the Little Calumet River and commenced daily sampling of the receiving water in the area from its outfalls to the mouth of Lake Michigan. On Sunday, August 18, 2019, IDEM received the first round of sampling results from ArcelorMittal. Although one sample showed low levels of cyanide beyond the break wall of the Little Calumet River, the levels detected at this location were well below the MCL for drinking water. As a precaution, however, IDEM directed ArcelorMittal to expand the sampling area to include the Lake Michigan shoreline to the west, including Ogden Dunes and West Beach. IDEM staff have also collected samples in these same areas. Results of the sampling conducted along the Lake Michigan shoreline are pending.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has estimated the number of dead fish at 3,000. This includes panfish, shad, channel catfish, bass and walleye. IDEM staff have not observed any additional dead or distressed fish in the area.

Indiana American Water has confirmed that no detections of cyanide have been found in their water and they have seen no impact on the raw water parameters they are monitoring for at their Ogden Dunes treatment facility.

IDEM and DNR continue to work with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to coordinate the response to this incident in the East Arm of the Little Calumet River in Portage, Ind.

Additional information about cyanide can be found on ATSDR's website:  
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/ToxProfiles/tp8-c1-b.pdf> [links.govdelivery.com].

We will continue to provide updates as we receive additional information.

**Media contacts:**

Sarah Bonick  
Indiana Department of Environmental Management  
317-232-8596  
[Media@idem.IN.gov](mailto:Media@idem.IN.gov)

Marty Benson  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
317-233-3853  
[MBenson@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:MBenson@dnr.IN.gov)