

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A top official for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency told Rep. Harry Mitchell today that the occurrence of two incidents involving high emissions of trichloroethylene (TCE) within a three-month period at a Superfund Site is “a situation that we haven’t encountered before” in the United States.

Susan Parker Bodine, who serves as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Energy Response, the office responsible for the EPA’s Superfund projects, made the comments after Mitchell asked her about the frequency of high TCE emissions from the same facility during a short period of time at other sites throughout the country.

In January, residents served by the Miller Road Water Treatment Facility, which is owned and operated by the Arizona American Water Company, were exposed to drinking water with more than four times the permissible concentration of TCE, a suspected cancer-causing agent, before a three-day tap water ban was implemented. It was the second TCE-related incident at the same facility in three months. [Source: [The Arizona Republic](#), Jan. 24, 2008]

Mitchell questioned EPA officials during today’s hearing of the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, which oversees the EPA. Mitchell is a member of the subcommittee.

“Today the EPA confirmed that the kind of persistent TCE problem we have in Scottsdale is so rare that it hasn’t happened anywhere else,” said Mitchell. “My constituents in Scottsdale are justifiably angry and deserve to know what happened, how it’s going to be fixed and get an assurance that this will never happen again.”

Mitchell has been asking the EPA for answers since November, when EPA first revealed that the same facility, which serves the Indian Bend Wash Superfund Site, had emitted elevated levels of TCE over an eight-day period in October. [Source: [East Valley Tribune](#), Dec. 7, 2007]

“I was assured and reassured, both by letter and by phone, that steps were being taken to guard against TCE emissions at Miller Road,” said Mitchell. “But just a few weeks later the same plant had an even more significant TCE problem.”

Parker Bodine also told Mitchell that the EPA will work to “restore your confidence and the

confidence of your constituents.” At Mitchell’s request, EPA is currently conducting a full investigation into both incidents.