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EPA reaches agreement for \$10 million cleanup study in Concord

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BOSTON (AP) Five parties responsible for contaminating a Concord Superfund site with hazardous waste have agreed to fund \$10 million in studies aimed at developing a cleanup plan, the Environmental Protection Agency announced Friday.

As part of the studies, buried drums of waste will be located and groundwater and soil tested at the Starmet Corp. site, where depleted uranium armor piercing bullets were made until 1999.

"I'm pleased we were able to reach an agreement that will help us fully understand the environmental problems at this site so that a cleanup plan can be developed," said Robert Varney, EPA New England regional administrator.

The agreement requires the Army and the Department of Energy to pay 98 percent of the costs, while Whittaker Corp., MONY Life Insurance Co. and Textron Inc. will pay 2 percent.

The EPA wanted Starmet to be part of the agreement, but later determined the company wasn't financially able to contribute, said EPA project manager Melissa Taylor. Starmet filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last year.

For decades, the site was a research and metal manufacturing facility licensed to use depleted uranium and other hazardous substances, including beryllium. From 1958 to 1985, contaminated waste was dumped in an unlined holding basin.

Starmet, formerly known as Nuclear Metals Inc., made the armor piercing bullets from the 1970s to 1999. It now develops various specialty metal products.

In June 2001, the site was added to the National Priority List, making it a Superfund site and eligible for public funds to clean up toxic waste.

The state attorney general's office has sued Starmet for allegedly storing at least 3,800 barrels of radioactive waste in violation of its license.

Starmet president Robert Quinn did not immediately return a call for comment on Friday.