



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Upper Makefield Pipeline DEP Webinar, September 9, 2025
Questions & Answers

Note: Due to time constraints, the below questions, submitted for the September 9 webinar, were not addressed during the virtual meeting. For all other questions addressed during the virtual September 9 townhall, please see the recorded webinar on [DEP's website](#).

Can you discuss the fact that our water tested negative for any petroleum products early on when it clearly tasted and smelled like fuel oil? You stated in the past that you went with ET's information. When multiple complaints came in, why didn't you follow up?

Answer: DEP believes odorous and highly soluble chemicals in the petroleum spread through the water column in advance of the more harmful ones found in jet fuel and gasoline. Most hydrocarbons tend to stay near the top of the water column, and most supply wells and pumps in the neighborhood are quite deep. Over time, as more petroleum was released from the pipeline and supply wells continued to be used, raising and lowering the water column and spreading contamination vertically in the well bore, petroleum chemicals started to be detected in the deeper well water at some homes.

Since 2023, DEP has responded to all complaints it has received regarding the Upper Makefield Township site as it received them.

How much fuel can one sock absorb?

Answer: Sunoco has informed us they are using two sizes of socks. One can absorb 0.13 gallons and the other can absorb 1 gallon of petroleum.

Can Sunoco "do the math" to update the volume of jet fuel and other fuels that were leaked?

Answer: DEP has asked Sunoco and the Federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) if there is an updated estimate of the volume of petroleum released from the pipeline. They indicated there is not a new figure at this time, but they are continuing to look at refining the original estimate of 50 barrels (2100 gallons).

Why won't you require Sunoco/ET to do more widespread sub-slab testing to help rule out that the poisonous fuel hasn't spread through the soil throughout the community?

Answer: Indoor air and sub-slab vapor sampling have been performed by Sunoco at 16 homes since February 2025. The purpose of this sampling is to evaluate potential vapor intrusion from soil and groundwater contamination into homes. This sampling was requested by DEP and focuses on the area of known contamination. We are aware of one home in that area that has not had vapor intrusion sampling, and we have asked Sunoco to collect samples there. The vapor intrusion evaluation is part of the interim site characterization report available for public review.

We're at the location of the leak. Our poet system has been replaced already. You stated that no systems had failed yet. Also, what is being done about the hot spots of soil contamination in our yard? Where will the water remediation from wells take place?

Answer: Sunoco performed a soil excavation at the pipeline release in February 2025. They collected soil samples from the excavation after removing the contaminated soil. Two of the post-excavation soil samples exceeded DEP's statewide health standard criteria. Sunoco has not yet proposed how those exceedances will be addressed.

Sunoco has not proposed a groundwater remediation system yet. They will be required to submit a remedial action plan within 60 days after DEP's approval of the interim site characterization report. That plan must describe how they propose to attain Act 2 cleanup standards for soil and groundwater.

Unleaded gasoline has chemicals unique to unleaded gasoline and not in jet fuel (Statement).

Answer: DEP publishes lists of contaminants of concern for different petroleum products and requires the analysis of those chemicals. The contaminant lists for gasoline and jet fuel are the same and include benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, cumene (isopropylbenzene), naphthalene, 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene, 1,3,5-trimethylbenzene, 1,2-dichloroethane, 1,2-dibromoethane, and lead. There are chemical differences between these two fuels, but the 11 contaminants listed here are common to both.

You mentioned that you haven't yet delved too deeply into the Site Characterization Report. Do you have plans to delve more deeply into the Site Characterization Report this week?

Answer: DEP is reviewing the interim site characterization report. The public comment period ends October 17, 2025, and Sunoco will have 15 days (until November 1, 2025) to provide DEP with responses to the comments. We will complete our review, accounting for all comments and responses, before issuing a decision.

Where will water remediation of wells be taking place?

Answer: Sunoco has not proposed a groundwater remediation system yet. They will be required to submit a remedial action plan within 60 days after DEP's approval of the interim site characterization report.

Can you have ET/Sunoco provide hard copies of the characterization report with appendices?

Answer: According to the Public Involvement Plan and Sunoco's website, a hardcopy of the interim site characterization report is available at the Upper Makefield Township building (1076 Eagle Road).

Have there been any indicators as to why some residents have extremely low water pressure or no water at all?

Answer: DEP has discussed this issue with homeowners and visited homes experiencing low water pressure. We have heard and observed greater amounts of sediment have been present, clogging the sediment filter and potentially causing other problems. The simultaneous occurrence of low water pressure in several neighborhood homes and the correlation with Sunoco's well drilling suggests the sediment could have been mobilized by the drilling. The sediment is naturally occurring material from the bedrock and not associated with the pipeline contamination. It's not unusual for increased sediment to be present in the aquifer for a time after a well is drilled.

Homeowners should report water pressure issues to Sunoco and contact DEP if the problem persists. DEP has asked Sunoco to address the problem at each home because it appears to be related to their work. Sediment filters likely need to be changed more frequently. We expect the increased sediment to dissipate as drilling is concluding under this phase of the investigation.

What is the status of the additional TWELVE anomalies that ET's own in-line inspection tools discovered along the pipeline? Has DEP had any preliminary conversations with them about the next steps regarding those anomalies?

Answer: The Department generally does not have oversight or regulatory authority over anomalies found in pipelines. PHMSA is the agency with regulatory authority over this pipeline, and would be the correct agency to contact regarding these questions.

1,027 gallons of petroleum have been recovered. How many gallons has SPLP estimated were leaked? And what is the breakdown of the amount of gallons of contamination that have been recover from private wells versus SPLP's recovery wells?

Answer: DEP has asked Sunoco and PHMSA if there is an updated estimate of the volume of petroleum released from the pipeline. They indicated there is not a new figure at this time, but they are continuing to look at refining the original estimate of 50 barrels (2100 gallons).

As of September 15, 2025, Sunoco has estimated 388 gallons of petroleum was recovered from wells, 163 gallons of which was collected from five private supply wells and 225 gallons of which was collected from two recovery wells on Glenwood Drive.

When do you expect to receive the plan from ET for septic investigation, given they shared it will be submitted in a separate transmittal?

Answer: DEP requested Sunoco document their evaluation of potential soil contamination from wastewater entering septic systems on August 29, 2025. SPLP indicated in their September 15 public meeting they anticipate submitting the report in the near future.