

Throop approves request for lead test

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THROOP - A request to have two borough homes tested for lead contamination will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, officials said.

The borough has signed off on a request for a risk assessment, drafted by its environmental consultants, which will determine whether properties owned by the Mattioli and Reed families have been contaminated, said Rocco DiPietro of Cocciardi and Associates.

"We think it's a prudent approach," he said.

The assessment will also determine the source of the contamination, he said.

Throop officials asked Cocciardi to file the request after members of both families complained of lead contamination on their properties.

Both are located near the former Marjol battery site, owned by Gould Electronics, which housed a plant that reclaimed lead from car batteries.

A second excavation of the site began March 25. Lead-contaminated materials, including battery casings and soil, will be capped with concrete when the project is complete.

Liz Mattioli said her family will allow the EPA to test their home if the borough's request is approved.

"This is what we've been asking for, but they're running us around in a circle," she said.

Her home was also tested in November after a doctor found elevated lead levels in her son's blood, she said. High levels were found in the soil and in dust samples from two rooms in her home. The source of the lead is still undetermined, she said.

Mr. DiPietro said lead has been leaving the site in "short bursts," detected by personal air monitors, above the maximum level set by the EPA - 0.15 micrograms per cubic meter.

Despite this, the site's high-volume air samples have not exceeded the EPA's maximum, he said.

The short bursts would have to occur daily for a sustained period of time to create a health hazard, he said.

Still, it's undetermined whether lead from the bursts is accumulating, or if Marjol is the source of the contamination - that's why Cocciardi is requesting an assessment.

"We want to make sure it's not accumulating in people's homes," he said.

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