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## Paint maker revises its plan for chemical cleanup

Environmentalists say Franklin firm isn't doing enough

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**FRANKLIN** — A powerful vacuum might siphon underground chemicals flowing into Liberty Creek and the Harpeth River, or the shape of the creek itself might be changed to aid in the cleanup.

Those ideas are part of a just-released plan from Franklin-based paint maker Egyptian Lacquer Manufacturing Co., whose chemical pollution has been the subject of scrutiny by state and local environmental officials for more than a year. State officials must now approve the plan or ask for another revision.

The plan, which was delayed for months as it was being revised, proposes new steps in addition to allowing the chemicals to drain into trenches along the creek — a proposal dubbed "natural attenuation" that has baffled and angered neighbors and environmental advocates.

But Bill Penny, attorney for Egyptian Lacquer, said the report includes tests that show the chemicals do not pose threats to human life, though they can harm aquatic creatures in the creek.

"I believe (the report) addresses first and foremost the health risk and the risk to the environment, which is what the state regulatory agency is concerned about," Penny said.

Harpeth River Watershed Executive Director Dorene Bolze blasted the plan because it doesn't do enough to address the pollution from the company's site.

The proposal would not "remove contamination that is beyond the (company) site even though the document admitted to extensive contamination with hazardous and carcinogenic chemicals in the surrounding area down to the Harpeth River and under the houses in the adjacent Daniels Drive neighborhood," Bolze said in a statement. "(Egyptian Lacquer) can not legally ignore the extensive contamination they have caused off their property."

## Remedies proposed

As part of the work, crews could dig four new wells at the company's Fort Granger Drive site and then use a "vacuum extraction" to remove liquid and vapors from the ground. Penny also proposes "reforming the channel of lower Liberty Creek" to create greater aeration during the creek's low flows.

Accomplishing this would take the cooperation of city and state officials.

Meanwhile, chemicals are not seeping into the water used for Franklin's drinking water, and chemical levels in the testing wells on the company's site show declines, according to the report.

But a testing well in the Daniels Drive neighborhood shows that the cancer-causing chemical benzene continues to be found "at concentration above regulatory level of concern" according to the report.

Federal regulations allow benzene to be present at .005 parts per billion as its maximum contaminant level, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines as the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water.

Earlier this month, benzene was found in the well on Daniels Drive at 0.013 of the maximum allowed, an increase of four one-thousandths since February.

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