

**STATEMENT OF VANESSA ALLEN SUTHERLAND, CHAIRPERSON**

**CSB RE-RELEASE OF FREEDOM INDUSTRIES REPORT**

**MAY 11, 2017**

Good Morning.

This morning, the CSB is releasing the revised report on the Freedom Industries investigation from the January 13, 2014, incident.

As you know, the Board adopted its final determinations and recommendations in September 2016. Following the adoption of the report, we received extensive public comment and a petition for correction. The Board reopened the report in order to allow our staff to respond to the comments and the petition in a comprehensive manner.

The report we are releasing today has been revised to provide more detail with respect to the early mitigation efforts and tank sample characterization, and the nomenclature was clarified to more appropriately identify the nature of the material that leaked into the Elk River.

In response to the petition, the CSB released four contractor reports in January 2017 which related to the metallurgical evaluation of the storage tank that ruptured, as well as the inspection of the failed tank and two neighboring tanks. We also calculated the volume of the material released and have determined that approximately 11,000 gallons leaked into the Elk River.

The CSB did not conduct its own toxicological analysis of the leaked materials. As you know, the Centers for Disease Control, including the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry; the National Toxicological Program; and the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health and Kanawha-Putnam Health Department all gathered or conducted toxicological information on this incident. We focused on the root cause analysis – as is required by our statutory mandate.

Our revised report does not include any new recommendations. Over the course of our investigation, the CSB met with all potential recommendation recipients. We found that many had already established requirements and implemented practices that address the safety gaps identified in our investigation.

In the final analysis, our findings remain unchanged: this release occurred because of a lack of preventive maintenance and inspections. There was no systemic inspection program that would have identified the corrosion. The community was put at needless risk. If the company had followed the industry's pre-established guidance on inspections, this incident would have never happened.

We've seen this before in many of our investigations – across a variety of industries. Routine inspections and preventive maintenance are the foundation of safety. Continued vigilance – and adherence -- to safe operating practices and procedures protects the community and the industry.

Now I'd be happy to take your questions.