

## Highlight C: Explanation of CERCLA Evaluation Criteria

The CERCLA criteria are divided into three categories of weighted important including threshold, balancing, and modifying criteria. The first two criteria, *Overall Protection of Human Health and the Environment* and *Compliance with ARARs* are threshold criteria. This means that *only* those remedial alternatives that provide adequate protection of human health and the environment and comply with ARARs (or justify a waiver) are eligible for selection. The five primary balancing criteria help describe relative technical and cost trade-offs among the remedial alternatives. The two modifying criteria (*State* and *Community Acceptance*) can be fully considered only after public comment is received on the Proposed Plan. In the final balancing of trade-offs between alternatives for remedy selection, modifying and balancing criteria are of equal importance.

- 1. *Overall Protection of Human Health and the Environment*** is the primary objective of the remedial action and determines whether an alternative provides adequate overall protection of human health and the environment. This criterion must be met for all remedial alternatives.
- 2. *Compliance with Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements*** addresses whether an alternative meets Federal and State environmental statutes, regulations, and other requirements that apply or are relevant and appropriate to the site. This criterion must be met for a remedial alternative to be eligible for consideration. A waiver of ARARs can occur if specific CERCLA criteria for waiver authorization are met.
- 3. *Long-Term Effectiveness and Permanence*** refers to the magnitude of residual risk and the ability of an alternative to maintain long-term protection after RAOs have been met.
- 4. *Reduction of Toxicity, Mobility, or Volume Through Treatment*** refers to an evaluation of the anticipated performance of the treatment technologies that may be employed in a remedy. Reduction of toxicity, mobility, and/or volume contributes toward overall protectiveness.
- 5. *Short-Term Effectiveness*** refers to evaluation of the speed with which the remedy achieves protection. It also refers to any potential adverse effects on human health and the environment during the construction and implementation phases of a remedial action.
- 6. *Implementability*** refers to the technical and administrative feasibility of a remedial action, including the availability of materials and services needed to implement the selection solution.
- 7. *Cost*** refers to an evaluation of the capital, operation, and maintenance, and present value costs for each alternative.
- 8. *State Acceptance*** indicates whether the state concurs with, opposes, or has no comment on the preferred alternatives based on review of the feasibility study and the Proposed Plan.
- 9. *Community Acceptance*** assesses the general public response to the Proposed Plan, following a review of the public comments received during the public comment