



## DEQ, OHA investigate metals pollutants in SE Portland air

February 03, 2016

Portland, OR—Preliminary air quality monitoring data showing high levels of cadmium and arsenic in the air near Southeast 22nd Ave. and Powell Boulevard in Portland are prompting state agencies to investigate potential health risks from exposure to these metals.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Oregon Health Authority and Multnomah County Health Department are working together to determine the significance to public health and how to communicate the potential risk to affected people. So far, data show that these metals are at levels above short- and long-term health benchmarks.

The Oregon Health Authority reports the health effects of exposure to arsenic and cadmium depends on how much a person is exposed to and for how long. The agencies need, and are working to collect, more monitoring data and analysis to supply the community with accurate and specific health related information. The agencies also are working to produce maps that will outline the potentially affected area.

The agencies will be issuing regular updates on this rapidly evolving situation.

### Background:

DEQ partnered with other agencies and educational institutions to collect data establishing a correlation between concentrations of metals in moss and air pollutant concentrations. This was performed as part of an area wide effort to understand sources and distribution of arsenic and cadmium air pollution. The results from the moss study showed areas with high levels of cadmium and arsenic and DEQ performed follow up air quality monitoring. DEQ collected samples in October 2015 and, consistent with normal lab analysis timing, received results in late January. The results of that analysis are what prompted this news release and level of attention and coordination between DEQ, OHA and Multnomah County Health.

### Contact:

David Monro, DEQ Air Quality Program, 503-229-5160,

[\*\*monro.david@deq.state.or.us\*\*](mailto:monro.david@deq.state.or.us)

[\*\*\(mailto:monro.david@deq.state.or.us?subject=RE:%20\)\*\*](mailto:monro.david@deq.state.or.us?subject=RE:%20)

**(mailto:armitage.sarah@deq.state.or.us?subject=RE:%20)**

Environment & Energy

Jonathan Modie, Oregon Health Authority, 971-673-1102,

**jonathan.n.modie@state.or.us**

**(mailto:jonathan.n.modie@state.or.us?subject=RE:%20)**

## Attachments

---