

# A Breed Apart



**Maine Drilling  
& Blasting**

For Immediate Release

## Settlement Advances Protection from Perchlorate

**Gardiner, ME (11 January 2010)** – The Town of Westford and Maine Drilling & Blasting have agreed to a settlement in connection with the release of perchlorate from the Town’s Highway Garage site. Both parties agree that their and the public’s interests will be better served by expending resources to address the perchlorate contamination, rather than in protracted legal proceedings resolving who is responsible for the clean up. In good faith, and in keeping with the Company’s policy of environmental stewardship, Maine Drilling & Blasting has brought forward \$1,000,000 to facilitate this clean-up.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, perchlorate is a water soluble chemical made up of “salts of ammonium, potassium, magnesium or sodium.” It is used in rocket and missile fuel, certain fireworks, blasting devices used for development, automobile air bag inflators, in leather tanning, and as an additive in lubricating oil. When perchlorate is used in a blasting operation, the granular residue can leach into underground aquifers or into surface water, depending on the soil type in the vicinity.

Blasting operations occurred at the Westford site for the purpose of constructing a new municipal building, the Westford Highway Department Garage at 28 North Street. The site is surrounded by a number of active and inactive rock quarrying operations, which have presumably used a variety of explosive materials for decades. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) alleged that perchlorate had been released to the environment as the result of blasting for the garage using explosives containing perchlorate. At the time Maine Drilling & Blasting blasted at the Highway Garage, perchlorate was not regulated by the Massachusetts DEP as a hazardous substance. Moreover, the explosives manufacturer did not warn Maine Drilling that there was any risk of ground water contamination associated with these products. Typical of MD&B’s industry leadership, MD&B immediately removed explosives with perchlorates from their inventory as soon as the MADEP identified its regulatory concerns.

As a result of the discovery of perchlorate contamination found in the Cote Well, a public water supply owned and operated by the Town, both the Town of Westford and Maine Drilling & Blasting were identified as Potentially Responsible Parties in separate Notices of Responsibility (NOR) issued to each in October 2007 by the MADEP. Since the issuance of the NOR to the Town, the Town has incurred response action costs consisting primarily of the services of a licensed site professional, the construction of a waterline, source area treatment, and providing bottled water to affected residents. The Town has determined that additional response actions, consisting primarily of constructing, operating and maintaining a water treatment facility for the Cote and Stepinski public water supply wells owned and operated by the Town will be necessary to address perchlorate contamination and to protect the Town’s public drinking water supply. Settlement funds will be utilized to further these initiatives.

Maine Drilling & Blasting, recognized as a leader in the industry and a long-term contributor to local communities, offers drilling, blasting and specialty services to the construction and quarry markets throughout the Northeastern United States. In addition to the corporate office in Gardiner, Maine, Maine Drilling & Blasting has offices in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

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