

Parcel A: What McCracken County Was Never Fully Told

A Community Narrative on Radioactive Soil, Broken Promises, and the Agencies That Should Have Protected Us

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SECTION 1

What Is Parcel A? A Plain-Language Background

Most McCracken County residents know the name. Few have been told the full story. The **Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PGDP)** opened in 1952 on a 3,556-acre site approximately 10 miles west of Paducah, Kentucky. It was built and operated by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to enrich uranium — first for nuclear weapons, later for commercial reactors. Operations continued for more than 60 years, making it one of the longest-running uranium enrichment facilities in American history.

Decades of uranium enrichment left behind a well-documented and deeply serious contamination legacy. Radioactive and chemical pollutants — including **uranium hexafluoride (UF₆)**, **trichloroethylene (TCE)**, and **technetium-99** — saturated the soil and entered the groundwater. Contamination plumes have been migrating northward toward the Ohio River for decades. This is not speculation; it is documented in the U.S. Department of Energy's own records and EPA Superfund files.

"**Parcel A**" is a roughly 100-acre portion of that larger PGDP site. It was leased to a private company called **General Matter** for the proposed **General Matter Paducah Enrichment Facility (GMPEF)** — a new uranium enrichment operation proposed for the same land that has been contaminated for generations.

In August 2026, the U.S. Department of Energy issued an Environmental Assessment (EA/DOE-EA-2327) with a **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)** for site preparation activities at Parcel A — including construction of a UF₆ storage pad and receipt of depleted uranium. That determination has raised serious and unresolved questions from residents, environmental advocates, and legal observers alike.

► **PGDP contaminated groundwater for miles — and a portion of that land is now being prepared for new uranium enrichment operations.**

The Soil Removal — What Happened

During site preparation activities at Parcel A, soil was excavated and removed from the DOE/General Matter site. That soil was reportedly transported and placed on **private property within McCracken County** — meaning potentially contaminated material from a nuclear legacy site left the controlled area entirely and was deposited on residential or private land without any prior public notice to the people living there.

On **August 28, 2026**, the McCracken County Fiscal Court issued a press release acknowledging community concerns about what it called *"the reported removal of soil from the property leased by General Matter at the U.S. Department of Energy's Paducah site and the reported placement of that soil on private property within McCracken County."*

? Key Question

If the soil was truly safe, why were residents not told in advance where it was going — and why does it take community pressure to get answers?

The Fiscal Court statement asserted: *"The dirt being removed from the site is deemed safe for removal."* But that statement raises more questions than it answers. **Deemed safe by whom?** Under what testing standards? Calibrated for industrial exposure — or for a family living on and farming that land? These distinctions matter enormously when we are talking about radioactive material.

The DOE Leasing Data Package itself acknowledges that Parcel A is deemed suitable for **industrial use** — not necessarily residential or agricultural contact. The site remains subject to land-use controls, groundwater restrictions, and other protective safeguards. Those safeguards do not travel with the soil once it leaves the site boundary and is placed in someone's yard, field, or driveway.

⚠ Why This Distinction Matters

Industrial safety standards are designed to protect a worker in personal protective equipment (PPE) during an eight-hour shift. They are not designed to protect a child playing in a backyard daily, a family growing vegetables, or livestock grazing in an open field. A soil deemed "safe" for a controlled industrial setting may not be appropriate for unrestricted residential land.

The False Assurances — A Pattern of Downplaying

The characterization of the Parcel A soil removal as simply "safe" follows a familiar and deeply troubling pattern at PGDP. Officials have repeatedly offered reassurances without providing residents the specific testing data, the contaminant thresholds applied, or the identities of those who conducted and verified those tests. Saying something is safe is not the same as demonstrating it.

The McCracken County Fiscal Court's own August 2026 statement acknowledged that questions about *"the origin of the soil, the locations where it may have been transported, the approvals or requirements applicable to the activity, and whether appropriate environmental and public-health safeguards were followed"* remain open. And yet that same statement simultaneously declared the dirt "deemed safe." That is not reassurance — that is contradiction.

⚠ Pattern Alert

This is not the first time McCracken County residents have been told not to worry. PGDP workers were exposed to radioactive materials and told they were safe. Contamination plumes spread into the regional aquifer while assurances were given. Uranium and TCE reached private wells before official action was taken. History is repeating itself.

A History of Half-Truths at PGDP

Year	What Happened
1952	PGDP opens. Uranium enrichment begins under the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Workers and the surrounding community receive minimal information about radiological hazards.
1950s–1980s	Decades of operations result in widespread soil and groundwater contamination — TCE, uranium, technetium-99, and other hazardous substances migrate into the subsurface and toward the Ohio River. Community is largely unaware.
1988	PGDP added to the EPA National Priorities List as a federal Superfund site, confirming the severity of contamination that had been accumulating for 36 years.
1990s–2000s	DOE begins providing alternative water supplies to residences after private wells in the surrounding area are confirmed contaminated. Families had been drinking that water for years.
2000s–Present	Ongoing Superfund remediation — expected to take decades and cost billions of dollars — continues. Contamination plumes have not been fully contained.
August 2026	DOE issues a Finding of No Significant Impact for new site preparation activities at Parcel A. Soil removed from the site and reportedly placed on private McCracken County property — without prior public notification.

"Being told something is 'deemed safe' is not the same as being shown the data. Residents deserve the actual test results, the testing methodology, the contaminant thresholds used, and independent verification — not a press release."

SECTION 4

The Regulatory Failures — Who Was Supposed to Protect Us

Three separate government agencies have explicit mandates to protect McCracken County residents from exactly this kind of situation. Here is what each agency is supposed to do — and where each one has fallen critically short.

A. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The EPA exists to protect human health and the environment. It is the federal agency responsible for enforcing the Superfund law (CERCLA) that governs cleanup at contaminated sites — including PGDP, which has been on the National Priorities List since 1988.

The EPA reviewed and accepted DOE's Environmental Assessment for Parcel A site preparation activities. Critics and legal observers have argued that this process was insufficiently independent and failed to adequately model the risk of off-site soil movement. The EA's Finding of No Significant Impact — issued for a site with more than 70 years of documented radioactive and chemical contamination — raises serious procedural questions about the rigor and independence of that review.

The EPA's own records confirm that contamination at PGDP includes radioactive material, TCE, technetium-99, and other hazardous substances. Yet no EPA requirement appears to have mandated explicit, public tracking of where excavated material from Parcel A was transported and deposited. That is a gap that should not exist.

B. Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KDEP)

The Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection is the state-level partner charged with overseeing environmental standards and enforcing state environmental law alongside federal agencies. It is Kentucky's line of defense when federal oversight falls short.

State oversight of soil transported off a federal nuclear legacy site onto private Kentucky property should — by any reasonable interpretation of KDEP's mandate — trigger explicit review, field testing, and public notification requirements. Kentucky residents have received no documented, public-facing communication from KDEP confirming what standards applied to this soil movement, whether field

testing occurred at the receiving private properties, or whether any regulatory violations were identified.

The absence of proactive public disclosure from KDEP represents a fundamental failure of its core transparency obligation to Kentucky citizens.

C. Kentucky Radiation Health Branch (Cabinet for Health and Family Services)

The Kentucky Radiation Health Branch is specifically and explicitly responsible for protecting the public from radiation exposure within the Commonwealth. It licenses and regulates radioactive material use and is the agency whose singular purpose is to ensure Kentuckians are not harmed by harmful radiation.

Any movement of soil from a DOE nuclear enrichment legacy site onto private residential or agricultural property in Kentucky should fall squarely within the Radiation Health Branch's oversight authority. Yet no public advisory, no health notice, and no monitoring announcement has been issued to affected property owners or their neighbors.

The agency specifically designed to protect Kentuckians from radiation has said nothing to the people who may now have that soil on their land.

► **Three agencies. One community. Zero proactive health warnings.**

SECTION 5

Why This Matters to Every McCracken County Resident

You may not live next to Parcel A. You may not know anyone whose property received soil from the PGDP site. And you may be tempted to think this is someone else's problem. It is not. Here is why every resident of this county has a direct stake in what happens next.

Radiation Does Not Respect Property Lines

If contaminated soil has been placed on private land — even at thresholds deemed acceptable for industrial settings — children playing in yards, families growing vegetable gardens, and livestock grazing on that land face exposure pathways that are fundamentally different from an industrial worker wearing PPE during a controlled shift. The bodies of children absorb radiation differently. Gardens concentrate contaminants through roots. These differences are not minor — they are the entire basis of how residential versus industrial safety standards are distinguished in federal and state regulation.

Groundwater Is Already Compromised

The PGDP's contamination plumes have already reached groundwater and threatened drinking water supplies in this region. Adding additional soil disturbance from an already-contaminated site — without full public disclosure of where that material was placed — compounds existing risks that have never been fully resolved. The aquifer does not know where one property ends and another begins.

Your Property Value and Title May Be Affected

Privately-owned land that has received soil from a federal nuclear legacy site, without proper disclosure, documentation, or notification, could face serious title and liability issues for current and future owners. Environmental liability does not simply disappear because an agency called the material "safe." Future buyers, lenders, and insurers will want documentation — documentation that does not currently exist in the public record.

If This Happened Once Without Notice, What Comes Next?

This soil removal occurred during *site preparation* — before the General Matter Paducah Enrichment Facility is even built. If material can leave the Parcel A boundary without adequate public notice during a preliminary phase, what accountability mechanisms will be in place during years of full construction and operation of an active uranium enrichment facility? That question demands an answer before a single additional truckload leaves the site.

Community Trust Is Not a Luxury — It Is a Requirement

When elected officials issue public statements that contain unresolved questions in the same paragraph as reassurances, that is not transparency — it is damage control. Genuine transparency means releasing the data, identifying who tested it, explaining what standards were applied, and telling residents where the material is. McCracken County deserves that standard of accountability. Nothing less.

"The precedent set here will define how future activities at this site are handled. If we accept opaque reassurances now, we signal that opaque reassurances are enough. They are not."

What You Can Do — Your Six Actions, Starting Today

Concern without action changes nothing. Here is what every McCracken County resident can do right now to demand accountability and protect this community.

Contact the McCracken County Fiscal Court, Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, the Kentucky Radiation Health Branch, and your state representatives. Demand the public release of all soil testing results, chain-of-custody documentation, and a complete list of every private property where soil from Parcel A was deposited. Do not accept a press release as a substitute for data.

Show up to Fiscal Court sessions, county commission meetings, and every public comment period related to the General Matter / GMPEF permitting process. Your spoken comments become part of the official record. A packed room sends a message that cannot be quietly managed away. Your voice matters — and it must be on the record.

If you believe soil from the Parcel A project may have been placed on or near your property — or on property adjacent to yours — document it immediately. Photograph the area, note dates and any vehicle or equipment activity you observed, and contact a licensed environmental attorney. Do not disturb or move the soil. Your documentation may be critical evidence.

Reach out to your Kentucky state legislators, the Governor's office, and your U.S. Congressional representatives and senators. Ask each of them directly and in writing to call for an **independent health and environmental review** of the Parcel A soil removal — one not conducted by the same agencies that approved the project in the first place.

Print it. Post it. Email it. Share it in your community groups and on social media. Every person who reads this is another person who can no longer claim they were not told. The more people who know, the harder it becomes for this issue to be quietly managed away. Share it today.

Under **Kentucky's Open Records Act (KRS Chapter 61)**, you have a legal right to request all government records related to Parcel A soil removal, including testing data, approval memos, transport authorizations, correspondence with General Matter, and any communications with KDEP or the Radiation Health Branch. Submit requests in writing to the relevant agencies. You do not need a lawyer to file a records request — just a letter and a stamp.

► **This is your county, your land, your health — and you have every right to ask hard questions and expect real answers**

SHARE THIS — Ready-to-Post Statements

Copy and paste any of the following — each is under 280 characters.

- ▶ Soil from a radioactive nuclear site in McCracken County, KY was reportedly moved to private property — with no advance notice to residents. Three agencies. Zero public health warnings. We deserve answers. #ParcelA #PGDP #McCrackenCounty
- ▶ Officials called PGDP soil "safe" — but safe by whose standard? Industrial workers in PPE, or families with kids playing outside? Those are not the same thing. Demand the actual test data. #ParcelA #Paducah #KentuckyEnvironment
- ▶ If this happened during site prep — before a new uranium plant is even built — what happens when it's fully operating? McCracken County needs independent oversight NOW. #GMPEF #GeneralMatter #OpenRecords #KYPolitics

Key Terms — Plain Language Glossary

PGDP (Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant): A uranium enrichment facility that operated for over 60 years on 3,556 acres approximately 10 miles west of Paducah, KY. It is a federal Superfund site due to decades of radioactive and chemical contamination.

UF6 (Uranium Hexafluoride): A highly toxic and radioactive compound used in uranium enrichment. It reacts violently with water and is corrosive. Storage and transport of UF6 is tightly regulated — in theory.

TCE (Trichloroethylene): A chemical solvent used in industrial cleaning at PGDP that is a known carcinogen. It has contaminated groundwater in the PGDP area and was found in private wells near the site.

FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact): An official determination by a federal agency that a proposed action will not significantly harm the environment, based on an Environmental Assessment. Critics argue a FONSI for Parcel A — with its 70+ year contamination history — was inappropriate and inadequately scrutinized.

Technetium-99: A radioactive element and byproduct of uranium fission. It moves readily through soil and water, has a very long half-life, and has been documented in the groundwater plume at PGDP migrating toward the Ohio River.

Superfund: The federal program (formally known as CERCLA — Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act) that identifies and funds cleanup of the nation's most contaminated sites. PGDP has been on the Superfund National Priorities List since 1988.

Open Records Request: A formal written request for government documents under Kentucky's Open Records Act (KRS Chapter 61). Any resident can file one. Agencies must respond within five business days and must provide the requested records unless a specific legal exemption applies.

About This Document: This narrative was prepared for public distribution in McCracken County, Kentucky. It is based on publicly available government documents, agency press releases, DOE Environmental Assessment records (EA/DOE-EA-2327), EPA Superfund records, and the McCracken County Fiscal Court's August 28, 2026 public statement. It is not intended as legal or medical advice. Residents with specific concerns about their health or property are strongly encouraged to consult licensed environmental or legal professionals and to contact their local health department and the Kentucky Radiation Health Branch directly.

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