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## 7. SUPERFUND:

**Citing 'difficult choices,' Obama proposes 6% cut in cleanup budget**

Jeremy P. Jacobs, E&amp;E reporter

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President Obama today called for reducing spending for U.S. EPA's Superfund program by \$33 million, a plan that could prevent the agency from starting new cleanups of contaminated properties.

The cut would reduce Superfund's remediation fiscal 2013 budget from \$565 million to \$532 million, or about 6 percent, and is part of Obama's proposal to trim EPA's budget by \$105 million from levels enacted by Congress ([see related story](#)).

Obama's Superfund plan could have a far-reaching impact. The budget says that "at reduced funding levels, there [would] be no new starts" of Superfund hazardous waste cleanup projects.

Overall, Obama called for cutting the total Superfund budget from \$1.214 billion to \$1.176 billion. The cut would represent a steady, if slow, decline in funding for Superfund. In fiscal 2010, for example, Congress enacted \$1.3 billion in spending for the program.

The administration emphasized that the cut to the remediation program would not pose a risk to human health.

"The administration maintains the funding level necessary for EPA to be prepared to respond to emergency releases of hazardous substances and circumstances that place the public at imminent risk of exposure and harm," the budget says. "Reductions will therefore be targeted largely to non-time critical activities that address long-term remediation goals."

The Obama budget would also save \$6 million by zeroing out Superfund support that went to EPA's sister agencies.

Obama's proposed \$33 million cut from the remedial program is the result of "difficult budget choices given the need to identify discretionary spending reductions," the administration's proposal says.

The funds allotted would be prioritized for ongoing activities and keeping contaminated groundwater under control, the budget says. However, it also notes that the reductions would "have an impact on program performance," including reducing the number of site assessments and general remedial actions taken.

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