California’s First Asbestos Monofill Opens

California Asbestos Monofill (CAM), the first asbestos-only site in California, recently opened in Calaveras County. This state-of-the-art facility is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains roughly 130 miles southeast of San Francisco. Set on the site of the former largest open-pit asbestos mine in the U.S., CAM offers a permanent asbestos disposal solution that is unmatched anywhere else in the U.S.

“CAM is a safe, final disposal site for asbestos waste,” said Joey E. Toney, vice president of operations with CAM. “Due to the immense size of the mine pit, 16,000,000 cubic yards, we will be able to essentially handle all of California’s asbestos waste. In addition, the serpentine rock base of the pit has a very low permeability (-1 x 10⁻⁹ to the -7 centimeters per second) and is an ideal natural liner for the asbestos waste.”

For some time, the disposal of asbestos waste has caused concern among building owners. Many of them are finding out that the small cost of asbestos disposal—roughly 5% of the entire abatement scenario—could balloon into millions of dollars in future remediation costs because of landfills that have been identified by the EPA as Superfund sites that must be cleaned up. The owner or “generator” of the asbestos waste is responsible for it forever—even in the landfill.

An increasing number of landfills that have commingled hazardous wastes are being identified by Superfund as remediation sites. The end result is that the generator of asbestos waste will have to share in the cost of remediating the landfill. The EPA and generators for all types of waste must then decide who is responsible for which portions of the cleanup.

“The concerns about liability are causing more and more building owners to become more diligent in selecting an appropriate site for the disposal of their asbestos waste,” said Toney. “CAM is different from the other disposal sites. In addition to accepting only asbestos waste, we also have a safe, systematic process to handle the waste from beginning to end.”

California Asbestos Monofill can allow what was once the weakest element in the asbestos abatement process (i.e., safe asbestos waste disposal) to be secured.