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Just 3 apartments yield WTC asbestos

Federal environmental officials have found very little asbestos in apartments near Ground Zero but acknowledge they still do not know how much contamination remains from the collapse of the World Trade Center.

Of 255 homes tested for asbestos by the Environmental Protection Agency, only three were deemed contaminated, officials said yesterday.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan) was among several critics who dismissed the initial findings as "incomplete, unsubstantiated and illusory."

"The EPA has demonstrated in the past that they would like nothing better than to declare the area safe, so they can pack up their bags and leave the Trade Center case behind them," Nadler said.

The criticism came even as the EPA said its test results were not yet statistically sig-

nificant because roughly 20,000 apartments eventually could be tested and cleaned.

More definitive data was not available because the cleanup program has been going forward more slowly than expected.

Officials said the delay has resulted partly from their attempts to coordinate cleaning so apartments in the same building are scrubbed at the same time, to avoid cross-contamination.

But they also faulted people living near Ground Zero who have failed to make and keep appointments with cleaning crews.

To date, 5,936 people have requested that their apartments be cleaned and tested, or only tested for asbestos.

The free program is available to anyone who lives south of Canal, Allen and Pike Sts.

Greg Gittrich



Jerrold Nadler

JONES

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NASDAQ

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