

## Santa Susana Field Lab Community Update: Cleanup Levels

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) oversees the investigation and cleanup of both chemical contamination and radiological contamination at the Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL) site. DTSC is committed to a fully protective cleanup of the site with orders in place requiring the three parties responsible ensure that protective standards will be met.

Those three responsible parties are NASA, the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Boeing Company. NASA and DOE both are bound by Administrative Orders on Consent, often referred to as AOCs. Boeing is held to a 2007 Consent Order entered into by DTSC and Boeing.

Under the AOCs, NASA and DOE soils must be cleaned up to background levels. In general, background levels are the typical or average amount of a chemical naturally occurring in the environment.

To determine chemical background levels for the SSFL project, DTSC collected and analyzed soil samples about three to five miles from SSFL. Through a series of meetings, the public was involved in developing the chemical background sampling efforts.

In coordination with DTSC, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) completed a study in 2011 to determine the radiological background levels for SSFL.

The 2007 Consent Order is based on a risk-based approach to cleanup. Risk-based cleanups are routinely done by DTSC and other state agencies, including US EPA. They must be consistent with laws, statutes and rules to prevent unacceptable exposure risks. Risk-based cleanup levels depend on the nature and extent of contamination, current and reasonably likely future land use, protection of surface and groundwater and related factors.

In California, local governments determine how land is used and zoned. DTSC uses the zoning information to aid in developing cleanup decisions. Ventura County ultimately determines how the SSFL property is zoned. On July 20, 2015, Ventura County issued a [letter](#) to DTSC identifying more than a dozen potential land uses for the site.

One of the possible land uses identified by Ventura County is “suburban residential with a garden.” This land use requires a very stringent cleanup level because people living in a house on the land and eating fruits and vegetables from a garden have a greater potential for exposure to chemicals in the soil.

The 2007 Consent Order does not include specific cleanup levels and DTSC has not yet determined specific cleanup levels for the Boeing portions of SSFL, but the cleanup levels will be consistent with federal and state law, and Ventura County land-use designations.

### Next Steps in the Investigation and Cleanup Process

- DTSC will review draft Investigation Reports submitted by Boeing, DOE and NASA. These Investigation Reports include findings of what contamination exists and where it is. The reports aid DTSC in determining what areas need to be cleaned up. DTSC will continue to post the reports to the DTSC website for public review.
- For the Boeing portion of SSFL, a feasibility study will be conducted to evaluate the different cleanup alternatives and approaches. Consistent with laws and regulations, the feasibility study must look at nine criteria:
  - **Threshold Criteria**
    1. Overall protection of human health and the environment
    2. Compliance with applicable or relevant and appropriate standards
  - **Primary Balancing Criteria**
    3. Long-term effectiveness and permanence
    4. Reduction of toxicity, mobility or volume
    5. Short-term effectiveness
    6. Implementability
    7. Cost
  - **Modifying Criteria**
    8. State acceptance
    9. Community acceptance

DTSC anticipates having an initial feasibility study available for review in 2016.

- The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will examine and address potential significant environmental impacts (including transportation, traffic, cultural, biological, etc.) of the proposed cleanup for all SSFL cleanup projects. It is expected to be ready for public review this winter.
- Following the feasibility studies, cleanup decision documents are prepared. These are plans detailing the first portion of the site cleanup. The cleanup decision documents are public noticed and made available for public comment. The first cleanup decision documents are expected to be ready for public review in 2016.

#### Offsite Protection

In addition to ensuring that the 2,849-acre SSFL site is cleaned up to a fully protective level, DTSC is committed to ensuring that contaminants from SSFL do not pose a threat or impact to nearby properties. DTSC, the US EPA, the California Department of Public Health, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and several other agencies have conducted extensive sampling, or reviewed and analyzed data, from the areas surrounding SSFL. There is contaminated soil on SSFL that will be required to be cleaned up. Based on the available data, there is no evidence of contamination from SSFL that poses an off-site threat to human health or the environment.