

# ATSDR'S PLAN TO "RE-STATE" SSFL HEALTH RISKS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Over the years, community members and local elected officials have worked very hard to make sure that studies about the health impacts of SSFL contamination were done independently, by qualified and highly regarded epidemiologists. **We did not trust the federal government to essentially evaluate itself.** The ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry) is a federal agency and so are NASA and the DOE, two of the parties responsible for contamination at SSFL.
- **The Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a bad reputation.** A 2009 report by the Congressional Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight found that ATSDR's practice is to "deny, delay, minimize, trivialize or ignore legitimate concerns and health considerations of local communities and well respected scientists and medical professionals." This is a little like the tobacco company studying smoking and concluding it has no health risks.
- **Since local elected officials and community members demanded *unbiased* health studies, several multi-year independent studies were conducted. These studies showed evidence that radioactive and chemical contamination from SSFL had impacted health in both workers and the offsite population.** Studies from the UCLA School of Public Health showed significant increases in death rates from key cancers were associated with the workers' radioactive and chemical exposures, and that contamination had migrated from SSFL in excess of EPA levels. A study from the University of Michigan showed a 60% increase in certain cancers associated with proximity to SSFL.
- In August, the federal ATSDR announced that it had accepted a "citizen's petition" in March 2015 to re-evaluate prior SSFL health studies and provide an "opinion" about cleanup "options." **The petition was not sent by a community member, but by a former SSFL official and DOE contractor who specifically asks ATSDR to refute previous studies and weigh in against the cleanup agreement.**
- ATSDR should not have accepted the petition. ATSDR is supposed to respond to genuine community petitions concerned about potential toxic exposures and act to assure the public is protected – **not to refute previous health findings and cleanup agreements that are already in place, at the request of an ally of the polluter.**
- **ATSDR does not have the expertise or authority to weigh in on cleanups.** It admits that it doesn't review remediation plans for other agencies, but says it will in fact "evaluate whether the proposed remedial options would be protective of human health." But there are no "proposed" remedial "options," and the cleanup agreements were signed six years ago. DOE and NASA have signed agreements to cleanup to background and per longstanding DTSC policy the Boeing Company is to clean up to comparable levels.
- **ATSDR has long been criticized for being too eager to please industry and for poorly conducted health assessments geared toward telling communities not to worry.**
- We have quality health studies from respected scientists. We have a cleanup agreement. **ATSDR should reverse its decision to accept the petition and should stay out of our community.**