

Surrounding Communities – near the Santa Susana Field Laboratory

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Sent via telefax 11/03/07

Linda Adams
Secretary
Cal-EPA

Dear Secretary Adams:

The recent actions regarding SB990 with the deal made by Schwarzenegger, has undermined all the progress made in the last year to restore confidence in DTSC among the people who live near the contaminated Rocketdyne Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL).

The Governor issued a press release announcing he was signing SB990 and trumpeting the fact that it establishes strict cleanup standards. He also announced Boeing had agreed to transfer the land to the state when cleaned up. This was all terrific news – if true.

For years the communities around the Rocketdyne Santa Susana Field Laboratory, a contaminated nuclear and rocket testing facility on the LA/Ventura County boundary, have been trying to get it cleaned up. The site of numerous reactor accidents, including a partial nuclear meltdown, and thousands of rocket tests, the facility is polluted with a witches' brew of radioactive and toxic materials, some of which leak off the site every time it rains.

In the mid-1990s, the federal government promised to clean the site up to strict US EPA Superfund standards. In 2003, the Bush Administration broke that commitment and announced it would leave 99% of the radioactively contaminated soil in place.

Senator Sheila Kuehl has introduced numerous legislation, to require cleanup to those EPA standards. This time, with remarkable bipartisan support and the endorsement by all the major localities—including LA and Ventura Counties, the Cities of LA, Simi Valley, Calabasas—the bill passed and was sent to the Governor.

On Friday, thus, he issued a press statement which in its very first sentence said he was going to sign Senator Kuehl's bill, "specifying the cleanup standards to be used" at the site. He also announced that Boeing would transfer the land to the state after cleanup was completed. Near the bottom of the press release he indicated that Senator Kuehl would carry some technical legislation next year to effectuate the land transfer.

What he did not say, is that the text of the language required the Senator to agree to introduce, as part of this deal, would strike all operative sections of the legislation he had just signed.

Under Boeing's deal with the Governor, Boeing would some time in the future come up with unspecified cleanup standards that will be far less protective than those in the law just enacted.

The communities below equate to half a million people now, and we have been dealing with broken promises with regard to this site, for years. How can we be assured that an effort to provide the most protective cleanup, will be made when the characterization of the site will not be completed until 2017 according to your own office. We have serious questions about the deal struck with the State, and what role the public will play in determining this still undefined, clean-up standard that we will have to live with for generations to come.

The Letter of Intent that this is all based on, is currently being treated as if it is classified, and the public is being prevented from seeing the entirety of this letter. This is another red-flag in the eyes of the public. Promises have been broken before, and we deserve answers, and we believe that those answers should come from you by allowing the public, a strong voice in these negotiations so that the deal made with the people, actually represents the best interests of the people.

We, as a community, urge you to take these issues into account and retroactively instate a higher clean up standard.

Sincerely,

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