



## Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Sacramento, California 95812-0806

Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor

March 19, 2010

Ms. Christina Walsh  
23350 Lake Manor Drive  
Chatsworth, California 91311

Dear Ms. Walsh:

This letter is in response to your November 24, 2009 petition to the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) requesting to establish a Community Advisory Group (CAG) for the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) site. We carefully evaluated the request and available options which took some time to complete.

Since receiving your petition, DTSC has heard not only from those supporting it but also from many in the community who view the formation of a CAG as potentially detrimental to the public participation process. This concern has resulted in a petition with a significant number of signatures requesting that DTSC not form another group, but instead requesting that DTSC enhance its existing public participation efforts.

While DTSC recognizes that it is common to have conflicting opinions within the community, we have significant concerns regarding the formation of another advisory panel for the SSFL site. The community as a whole is split on the formation of this CAG, and having an additional group may amplify these divisions rather than facilitate meaningful communication. Having another group would also increase time demands on the state and community members who participate. As a result, DTSC has decided not to accept your petition at this time.

In the decision to not accept your petition, we are not dismissing the concerns that may have led to the petition. We are committed to establishing and expanding open and proactive community participation, which we believe is essential to the success of any cleanup project. To this end, we are launching an effort to improve communications and create opportunities for greater public involvement. These steps will better meet our commitment to transparency and public participation while recognizing the diverse levels of interest and viewpoints within the community.

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Recognizing the diverse viewpoints within the community, we will be seeking input on developing more effective communication tools, including identifying different types of forums and meeting formats that better meet the community's needs. This will occur during the next several months as we hold listening sessions in various neighborhoods and conduct surveys to solicit feedback and ideas.

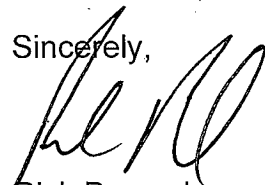
Using input from the community, we will update our Web site to give readers the most up-to-date information in a user-friendly format, establish an electronic mail distribution that will provide regular updates on the project, hold open houses making our staff accessible to discuss the project in detail, and provide open forums for the public to openly raise concerns and get answers to questions. We will also build upon the format of our recent technical meetings in our Chatsworth office, for which we've received very positive feedback.

Additionally, we are aware of the concerns expressed about the composition and the flow of information through the existing Community Work Group meetings. I intend to raise these concerns with the Work Group and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency who set up the workgroup, seeking to enhance the Work Group's composition and ensure that its agenda and discussions facilitate open dialogue between the diverse perspectives within the community.

I want to express my thanks to you for your continued efforts and participation in discussions related to this site and for raising your concerns. While it is DTSC that must ultimately make decisions based on its authority, our decisions are best made when they take into account the concerns and feedback from everyone impacted by those decisions.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (916) 327-1186, or [rbrausch@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:rbrausch@dtsc.ca.gov), or you can contact Susan Callery at (818) 717-6567, or [scallery@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:scallery@dtsc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Rick Brausch  
SSFL Project Director

cc: See next page

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cc: Mr. Maziar Movassaghi  
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