



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

March 12, 2009

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Linda Adams
Secretary for Environmental Protection
California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812

Dear Secretary Adams:

Thank you for your letter regarding the current status of important issues at the Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL). I have been asked by Administrator Jackson to respond to your letter on her behalf. Thank you also for meeting with both of us on Wednesday February 25, 2009. We appreciated having the opportunity to speak with you in person.

I am pleased that the State of California appears poised to reach agreement with the responsible parties which will require a comprehensive and protective cleanup of the SSFL. As such, and as a result of the state's letter to EPA of January 14, 2009 stating that EPA should not list the site on the National Priorities List (NPL), EPA does not intend to continue with its listing process for placement of SSFL on the NPL, at this time.

EPA received \$1.5 million from the Department of Energy (DOE) via an Interagency Agreement in July 2008 to conduct a Radiological Background Study for SSFL. The study forms the basis for future radiological studies that will be conducted on the SSFL site itself. The Background Study is underway and EPA has been working closely with the State, the responsible parties, and the community in order to complete a substantial portion of the study by the end of 2009.

On February 19, 2009 EPA and DOE signed another Interagency Agreement in which an additional \$1.7 million was transferred to EPA from DOE in order to begin work toward completion of a Radiological Study at Area IV of SSFL. As we are currently doing on the Background Study, EPA intends to work closely with all stakeholders while we develop and conduct this important Study.

In your letter dated February 24, 2009, you made four specific requests which I will address below:

1. Complete the Radiological Study before the end of 2011:

EPA will complete the Radiological Study of Area IV if we receive full funding from DOE. We are currently discussing with DOE the use of economic stimulus funding for the Radiological Study of Area IV. We estimate that the study will be completed in 2012, however, we will make every effort to accelerate this schedule and keep in step with your cleanup goals for this site. Because of the long and controversial history surrounding SSFL, EPA believes that the Radiological Study of Area IV must be technically sound and scientifically credible. We

also believe that it is important to closely involve the State and the community and other stakeholders in a very transparent way.

2. Technical Support Assistance:

EPA Region 9 will continue to provide technical assistance and support to DTSC on SSFL. We are also willing to coordinate support from our Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation in Washington DC and the Office of Radiation and Indoor Environments Lab in Las Vegas. We are working with these offices to address our priority work in Area IV. Because the State is the overall lead for the site and will be working to achieve a comprehensive and expedited cleanup of the entire site through enforcement efforts, it is important that DTSC technical staff establish and maintain a lead role in framing the technical parameters of this work. DTSC technical support staff such as toxicologists and risk assessors should establish consistent parameters for risk assessments and data quality objectives across the entire site and off-site for the many contaminants at the site. It is important that the State establish these parameters on the advice of its own technical experts so that cleanup decisions are legally defensible from the State's perspective and meet the community's expectations.

3. Continue Support of the SSFL Interagency Workgroup:

As we stated in our responses to letters from Representative Elton Gallegly, Senator Fran Pavley, and Assemblywoman Julia Brownley regarding this important group, EPA will continue funding the SSFL Community Workgroup (CWG) using funds we receive from DOE. This will ensure that there are no interruptions in CWG meetings and this important community forum on SSFL will continue. We agree that the SSFL Workgroup provides an important vehicle for community involvement. As we have discussed with Mr. Norman Riley, DTSC will take over the logistics of planning and running the meeting. We will continue to work with DTSC on securing long-term Potentially Responsible Party (PRP) funding of the CWG. Given DTSC's role as the regulatory agency in charge of overall cleanup of SSFL, EPA Region 9 and DTSC agree that it is appropriate for DTSC to take on these activities.

4. Assist in Securing Funding for Cleanup:

EPA is currently discussing the possibility of receiving substantial funding for implementation of House Resolution 2764 from DOE through the economic stimulus package. We will keep the State informed of the status of these discussions. Please note however that EPA has no role in setting annual federal appropriations for DOE or NASA.

EPA shares the State's interest in completing the long sought investigation and cleanup of SSFL. We are confident that the State will accomplish this goal. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or your staff may contact Mr. Keith Takata, Superfund Division Director, at (415) 947-8709.

Sincerely,



Laura Yoshii
Acting Regional Administrator

cc:

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