



Susana Knolls Homeowners Association
1409 Kuehner Dr. #5
Simi Valley, CA 93063

December 6, 2017

Mr. Mark Malinowski
SSFL CEQA Comments
California Department of Toxic Substances Control
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826

RE: Program EIR on Cleanup of Santa Susana Field Laboratory

Dear Mr. Malinowski:

The Susana Knolls Homeowners Association (SKHA) is writing to submit our comments regarding the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) cleanup.

Formed in the late 1960s, SKHA is one of the oldest Homeowner's Associations in Ventura County. We are a community of approximately 500 homes located directly beneath SSFL. Many of our homes were built in the 1920's and 1930's as hunting cabins, so our community was inhabited when the SSFL facility opened. Our HOA Board has been active in cleanup efforts since 1989 when the news first broke about the 1959 partial nuclear meltdown at SSFL. Our HOA Board members have attended many, many meetings through the years about SSFL contamination and cleanup efforts.

After decades of cleanup efforts, we were thrilled when we learned in 2010 that the Administrative Orders on Consent (AOCs) had been signed by DTSC with NASA and DOE, requiring them to cleanup their parts of the lab to background levels of contamination. Remember, we are the ones who are directly in the path of the SSFL contamination that comes down from the hill, especially during windy Santa Ana conditions and during rains. Many of us have creeks running through our properties, and we know that Boeing has had scores of surface water violations by the Water Board. Therefore when the AOCs were signed, we thought we would soon be free from worry exposure to SSFL's radiological and chemical contaminants. It seemed that we were nearing the finishing line and that since the AOC said the cleanup should be finished in 2017, we would finally have some peace of mind.

That is why in February 2014 our scoping comments for DTSC's PEIR, we wrote, "The EIR needs to be rigorously compliant with the AOCs. The project needs to be defined expressly as cleanup of the NASA and DOE portions of the property to background as required by the AOC. The alternatives need also to be compliant with the AOCs, i.e., be limited to different ways to meet those AOC requirements of cleanup to background. The EIR must be about how to comply with the AOCs, not whether to."

Fast forward to December 2017 and the cleanup hasn't even begun. DTSC allowed both NASA and DOE to propose cleanup options that were not compliant with the AOC. And now DTSC's own PEIR violates the AOC. The AOC prohibits leaving contamination on site. But DTSC's PEIR proposes leaving potentially huge amounts of contaminated soil not cleaned up saying it could "naturally attenuate" (go away on it's own, slowly, over years) and by applying biological and cultural exemptions that do not meet the narrow definition allowed for in the AOCs. It is unacceptable to us that DTSC would break the cleanup agreement that it itself signed, thereby keeping communities like ours on the front line of SSFL to face risks of exposure indefinitely.

For Boeing's part of SSFL, DTSC said in 2010 that it would require the most protective cleanup standard because it would rely on Ventura County's zoning for the site, which allows residential and agricultural uses. That also gave us great comfort. We thought that even though Boeing wasn't going to sign the AOCs, DTSC would still require it to cleanup to a standard that is comparable to background.

But now, DTSC has abandoned that commitment too. DTSC's PEIR entirely rules out a cleanup to background for Boeing's area, as well as residential or agricultural standards. DTSC's PEIR says the most protective standard that it would consider for Boeing's property is one that is 30 times weaker than its own EPA suburban residential standard. It also proposes allowing Boeing to exempt from clean up unspecified amounts of soil due to natural attenuation and unspecified biological and cultural reasons.

Boeing is pushing to clean up even less, claiming that its open space easement means it should only have to clean up to recreational standards – which would leave most of the contamination on site. We find this outrageous. Recreation standards are weak because they are based upon people being on the site infrequently. But we live near SSFL 26-7, in residential areas, not open space. SSFL contamination – dangerous radionuclides and toxic chemicals - doesn't recognize zoning or property lines. It migrates, and if all the contamination is not fully cleaned up, then we will continue to be exposed to it. SKHA therefore does not recommend any end use of SSFL that would result in contamination remaining on site.

Boeing's open space easement is also no guarantee that the land will always be open space. The easement is not certified and does not prevent future building on the property. It also doesn't prohibit transfer of the land to another entity that could build on it. The easement also can't be enforced by anyone other than the land trust, which is not required to enforce it. It is entirely conceivable that SSFL could therefore see development in the future. We do not think the easement should have any impact on the SSFL cleanup, much less be used as an excuse for Boeing to evade its cleanup obligations.

DTSC's PEIR only addresses potential negative impacts from the cleanup. It does not address health or ecological risks from contamination that could remain on site under its proposals. Boeing's 2015 risk assessment report shows that there are very high cancer and ecological risks in some areas of the site, but these risks are not analyzed in DTSC's EIR. This gives an incredibly unbalanced assessment that appears intended to create opposition to the cleanup – much like Boeing's dishonest "Protect Santa Susana" campaign. DOE, NASA, Boeing and its predecessors were not worried about negative impacts to the environment when they were polluting it so horribly. Any potential impacts from the cleanup can be mitigated, and far outweigh the risks of leaving the contamination on site.

In sum, SKHA asks DTSC to revise its PEIR to be fully compliant with the AOCs and its previous commitment to require Boeing to clean up to comparable levels. The PEIR should not propose leaving any contamination on site, but if it does then it must analyze both the human health and ecological risks from that contamination. This is the information most relevant to what we and so many others care about most – our health and wellbeing.

We who live so very close to SSFL are tired of DTSC's broken cleanup promises. DTSC should work quickly to revise the PEIR to uphold its previous commitments for full cleanup so that it can begin to finally clean up SSFL, without delay.

Sincerely,

Marie Mason, Vice President
Susana Knolls Homeowners Association

Cc: Matthew Rodriguez, CalEPA Secretary