



Public Notice

**Arsenic Relative Bioavailability Study
Empire Mine State Historic Park
10791 East Empire Street
Grass Valley, Nevada County**



Public Comment Period: August 13 to September 14, 2009

The California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), requests public comment on an Arsenic Relative Bioavailability Study (Study). Bioavailability is a term used by several branches of scientific study to describe the way chemicals are absorbed by humans and other animals if they are swallowed. The goal of the Study is to determine the range of arsenic bioavailability that may exist in contaminated soil at former mine sites, and to develop better methods for; determining the human health effects caused by exposure to arsenic at mining sites; calculating health risk; and, developing health based site cleanup goals for arsenic.

DTSC was awarded a Training Research and Technical Assistance Grant to conduct the Study. The United States Environmental Protection Agency is providing the funding.

A Quality Assurance Project Plan, that includes a Field Sampling Plan, as well as a Health and Safety Plan, has been prepared by DTSC to establish protocols for conducting this research Study. Between 30 to 60 soil samples will be collected at several mines within the Empire Mine State Historic Park located at 10791 East Empire Street, Grass Valley.

The proposed project does not make any provisions for DTSC to make remedial action decisions or conduct remedial action activities. The project's Grant Funding was provided solely for specified investigations and research activities.

The soil samples will be sent off to Ohio State University for processing and then distributed to the other research partners for analysis. When the samples have been analyzed, the results will be assessed with the intent to produce an Arsenic Bioavailability Guidance document that will be made available to the public. The Grant is for five years and the guidance document will be the last step in the Study.

In addition, DTSC had to address the impacts the Study could have on the environment under a state law known as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions, and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. DTSC developed an Initial Study under CEQA for this project. An Initial Study is a preliminary analysis conducted by the lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment. The Initial Study also aids in determining what type of environmental document to prepare. Under CEQA, a Negative Declaration has been prepared for the project. A Negative Declaration is a brief report written by the lead agency (in this case it is DTSC) describing the reasons that a proposed project, not exempt from CEQA, will not have a significant effect on the environment.

All written comments must be postmarked no later than September 14, 2009 and should be sent to the attention of Mr. Perry Myers, DTSC Project Manager, 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento, California 95826. Comments submitted electronically should be sent to Mr. Myers at pmyers@dtsc.ca.gov no later than September 14, 2009.

The Study/proposed Negative Declaration and other related documents are available for review at the:

Grass Valley Public Library
207 Mill Street
Grass Valley, California 95945
(530) 273-4117

Department of Toxic Substances Control
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, California 95826
(916) 255-3758

Empire Mine State Historic Park
Visitors Service Center
10791 East Empire Street
Grass Valley, California 95945
(530) 273-8522

If you have questions about the Study or proposed Negative Declaration, please contact Mr. Myers at (916) 255-3708.