



# CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

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## Department of Toxic Substances Control

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### **Cleaning up “Legacy Pesticides”: Topic of DTSC Presentation at Agriculture Conference in Sacramento**

SACRAMENTO – “Using innovative technologies to save time and money, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is exploring the use of a new approach to address contamination from ‘legacy pesticides’ – long-banned farm chemicals.. Bioremediation allows for onsite cleanup at an enormous savings – about half the cost of previous methods,” said DTSC Director Maureen Gorsen. “We are pleased to have the opportunity to share our successes in cleaning up toxic chemicals in soils at the ‘Future of Agriculture Conference’ this week in Sacramento.” (Aug. 7-9 at the Hyatt Regency).

At the Conference, DTSC Branch Chief Barbara Cook will describe bioremediation of toxaphene and dieldrin at the Borello Property in Morgan Hill. These chemicals were banned as pesticides more than 20 years ago because of their toxicity and persistence in soil. Using this new bioremediation technology enabled cleanup of the 14-acre brownfield site to residential standards within two months at a relatively low cost and with low impact to the environment.

The bioremediation process works by using naturally occurring microorganisms to break down harmful chemicals, changing them into non-toxic substances, such as salt, carbon dioxide and water. The method typically used in the past to remediate such -contaminated areas was to excavate soil and dispose of it offsite at approved landfills.

Also scheduled to speak at the conference is DTSC’s Debra Taylor, who will provide a poster presentation on the Department’s streamlined process for investigating possible contamination at proposed school sites that were formerly agricultural sites.

“We have made great strides expediting the process of testing and remediating proposed school sites for ‘legacy pesticide’ contamination,” said Gorsen. “We want to get schools built quickly to accommodate California’s growing student population while ensuring children are safe from environmental hazards.”

The “Future of Agriculture: Science, Stewardship and Sustainability Conference” will run from Aug. 7-9 at the Hyatt Regency in Sacramento. DTSC’s bioremediation presentation will take place Monday, August 7 at 2:20 p.m. in Conference Room D. The investigating proposed school sites presentation is set for Tuesday, August 8 at 11:40 a.m. in Conference Room A.

For more information, call DTSC Public Information Officer Carol Singleton at 916.255.6578.

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***The Department of Toxic Substances Control is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC’s mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.***