



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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Barbara A. Lee, Director

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DTSC Awards Interim Cleanup Contract to NEC Work Accelerates Cleanup of Properties Surrounding the Former Exide Technologies Battery Recycling Plant

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced today that contractor NEC Inc. will accelerate its clean-up of lead-contaminated properties in the area surrounding the now closed Exide Technologies battery recycling facility, as DTSC prepares to award a larger cleanup contract for the area.

National Engineering and Consulting Group Inc. (NEC) is already conducting targeted cleanups of properties with the highest lead levels and greatest risk of exposure to sensitive populations, under a process known as Time Critical Removal Actions. Under a new contract announced today, the contractor will clean up an additional 215 properties in the area starting next month.

“The partnership with NEC will allow us to increase the number of removal actions and keep the process moving forward, while we work to execute a contract to safely and effectively address the cleanup of the rest of the 2,500 properties,” said DTSC Director Barbara A. Lee.

DTSC initially awarded the larger cleanup contract to Environmental Quality Management (EQM), but terminated its negotiations with the firm last month, after they failed to execute a contract because they could not comply with the bid they submitted. DTSC has referred the matter to the Attorney General’s office for review.

“We had grave concerns about EQM’s ability to implement the Exide residential cleanup, and achieve DTSC’s goal to protect the health of the people who live in the communities around the former Exide facility,” Director Lee said. “This was a setback, but our commitment to this community is as strong as ever.”

DTSC has conducted lead testing on more than 8,500 properties within the roughly 1.7 miles of the former Exide facility. Last month, the Department released an interactive map, based on tens of thousands of soil samples, that details the lead contamination and identifies properties prioritized for cleanup. The map will help interested parties better understand and follow the progress of the cleanup.

The state is holding Exide accountable for this contamination and, under a court order, the company must deliver a plan by May 2019 for cleaning the lead in the surrounding community. Ultimately, Exide will have to pay for this cleanup.

While the NEC contract accelerates the pace of interim cleanups, DTSC is moving forward to hire an experienced and qualified team to conduct the larger effort to remove lead contamination from 2,500 properties with the greatest lead levels, based on the soil sampling results. The Exide clean-up effort is the largest of its kind in California history.

In 2016, Governor Brown signed legislation directing \$176.6 million to expedite the sampling of approximately 10,000 residential and other sensitive land-use properties within roughly 1.7 miles of the former Exide facility in Vernon, and to clean up as many as 2,500 properties with the highest levels of lead in soil and greatest risk of exposure. DTSC is the lead agency implementing this cleanup.

DTSC is committed to cleaning up lead-contaminated soil at residential properties, schools, parks, day care centers, and child care facilities with the highest levels of lead in soil, and greatest risk of exposure, within roughly 1.7 miles of the former Exide facility. The Department's top priority is protecting the health and safety of people in this community, especially the youngest and most vulnerable.

DTSC has hosted more than 200 resident-focused meetings as part of the Department's commitment to openly and transparently communicate information about the process to the surrounding community.

Residents who have questions about the project can call 844-225-3887. DTSC representatives are also available to answer questions during business hours at our Commerce Office located at 6119 E. Washington Boulevard, Suite 120, Commerce, California 90040.

To view the NEC contract go to:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/upload/17-T4473-STD-213-FULLY-EXECUTED.pdf>

To view the Cleanup Plan, visit:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/Residential-Cleanup.cfm>

To review the Environmental Impact Report, visit:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/Residential-Cleanup.cfm>

Additional project documents and information can be found here:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/WorkforceDev.cfm>



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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated resources, enforcing hazardous waste laws, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.