



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Former Alhambra Gas Plant Site Cleanup is Completed

ALHAMBRA — The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced today that cleanup efforts at 19 residential properties located on the former Alhambra Manufactured Gas Plant Site have been completed. During the six-month cleanup project, approximately 9,000 tons of soil containing carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were excavated and removed from the site.

Residents, families and property owners will celebrate the restoration of their neighborhood at noon on Saturday, February 28, 1998 when the Southern California Gas Company hosts a community gathering at 824 Curtis Lane in Alhambra. Local legislators and the Mayor of Alhambra have been invited to join the celebration, and DTSC officials will present the Gas Company with a certificate acknowledging the completion of the cleanup.

"This is a remarkable achievement," said Paul Blais, DTSC's Deputy Director of Site Mitigation. "In just six months, the cleanup of this site is complete. It really shows the effectiveness of our expedited program when a community, property owners and regulators work together."

The cleanup was conducted under DTSC's Expedited Remedial Action Program (ERAP), and is the first site to be completed under the program. ERAP is a pilot program designed to accelerate remediation of 30 hazardous release sites throughout California by establishing cleanup goals consistent with permanent land use. The program, created by SB 923 (Calderon, Chapter 435, Statutes of 1994), features an equitable process to allocate liability costs and opportunities for orphan shares when responsible parties can't be found or are insolvent.

Beginning in July 1997, residents at the Alhambra site were temporarily relocated while heavy machinery removed the landscapes, driveways, sidewalks and walkways around their homes. While the cleanup work was underway, no foundations were disturbed to complete the removal of the contaminated soil. Each lot was cleaned to a level of 0.9 parts per million (ppm) PAH, a level considered safe for residential use, and backfilled with clean soil. Landscaping, walkways, driveways and sidewalks were all replaced. Currently, residents are settling back into their homes.

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California Coke & Gas, a company that no longer exists, operated the Alhambra plant from 1906 to 1913, manufacturing gas from coal. Daily operations also resulted in the creation of lampblack. Residues of PAHs in lampblack can remain in the soil and pose potential health risks, necessitating cleanup efforts such as those undertaken at the Alhambra site.

Lampblack is a sooty-substance byproduct created during the process of manufacturing gas from coal. From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, gas for heating, cooking and lighting was produced from the combustion of coal and oil at manufactured gas plants throughout California. Because compression and pipeline facilities were not available, communities typically operated their own gas plants. Most plants were dismantled when natural gas became more accessible from oil fields and interstate pipelines.

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