



Spotlight on DTSC

Bacteria Could Eat Up Groundwater Contamination Under LA School

People have until Feb. 19 to comment on a plan to clean up groundwater contaminated with petroleum products and industrial solvents under a Los Angeles school.

The water under [Gratts Academy for Young Scholars](#) at 309 Lucas Avenue is deep and not used for drinking, so there is no immediate risk to students or teachers, according to the state [Department of Toxic Substances Control](#), which is overseeing the cleanup.

DTSC officials say it's important to clean up the 5.2 acres - which were home to a taxi garage and maintenance facility from 1923 to 1984 - to ensure the groundwater is safe for future use.

The garage contained seven underground storage tanks, four hydraulic hoists, an elevator and spray paint booth. Tests conducted by the school district before the campus was built in 1995 revealed pollutants in the soil and water.

The district installed a system to remove the contaminants and a barrier to keep vapors out of buildings. The groundwater cleanup system has been in place since 1995, and periodic tests show no contaminants entering structures.

However, to address chlorinated solvent-impacted groundwater below the school garage area, the school district is proposing to inject bacteria and nutrients into the groundwater in a process known as [bioremediation](#).

Bioremediation is the practice of adding bacteria and nutrients to increase the vitality of naturally occurring bacteria feeding off the contaminants, thus accelerating the rate of decomposition, said Amit Pathak, a senior hazardous substances engineer for DTSC. "It is considered one of the fastest, cheapest and most environmentally sensitive methods of clean up," he said.



DEPARTMENT *of* TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL

The school district is expected to start the work in the summer, and then monitor the progress over the next few years, Pathak said.

Comments should be sent to Ivy Osornio, Project Manager, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 5796 Corporate Ave., Cypress, CA. 90603-4732, or email: IOsornio@dtsc.ca.gov.