



The Salton Sea: Does it figure in DTSC's future?

While visiting employees in Imperial County, DTSC Director Debbie Raphael and El Centro Branch Chief Roger Vintze took a side trip to the [Salton Sea](#), which is receding, and got a close look at the county's geothermal resources, which in some areas, bubble to the surface through vents.

There are concerns over the potential environmental effects of the shrinking sea exposing the salts of the shoreline and the geothermal energy processes – concerns that DTSC closely follows. The sea has a salt content 1.5 times greater than the Pacific Ocean, and one worry, as [this NPR story](#) notes, is whether dust storms from the increasing bare soil could contain a toxic stew that is potentially harmful.

And magma in the region is shallow, creating little geothermal volcanoes that have become a [popular tourist attraction](#), and help make Imperial County a major source of geothermal energy. “I was fascinated to learn about the geology of the area, and to get a firsthand sense of the scale of geothermal power generation around the sea,” Raphael said. “DTSC has an important role in ensuring that the brine left over from the geothermal process is handled and disposed of in a manner that protects the health of surrounding communities and the environment.”

