Port cleanup project is an economic boost

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has a supporting role in one of the most ambitious revitalization projects in the nation – a $1.2 billion makeover of the San Pedro waterfront near Long Beach.

The project encompasses about 400 acres, and could take more than a decade to finish. When completed, San Pedro will better connect to its lifeblood harbor, and could experience a significant economic boost.

DTSC is currently presiding over the cleanup of 25 acres on Terminal Island proposed to be the new home of Jankovich Marine Fueling Station, which would move from its current spot adjacent to Ports O’Call Village. The relocation would allow for the expansion of the village, which could eventually contain 300,000 square feet of businesses.

Jankovich is expected to move by 2015 across the channel to Berth 240, which would be enhanced with new storage tanks and 6,400 linear feet of new wharf construction.

The fueling station relocation is so important to the port that harbor commissioners asked to speed things up. They wanted the necessary soil excavation finished by fall, so DTSC added another project manager, Tony Hashemian, to the team. A community profile and public notice were prepared in only a few weeks, and progress is rapid.

“We have worked hard to expedite the process,” Hashemian said. “We want to get the waste out before the summer is over.”

The new fueling station isn’t the largest component of the San Pedro waterfront project, but it is crucial. “It’s a piece of the puzzle as we put everything into place,” said Phillip Sanfield, port spokesman. “It frees up space right along the public side of the waterfront. It allows Ports O’Call to get the full treatment.”

And DTSC’s work may not stop there. “We do have other environmentally sensitive sites to clean up down the line,” Sanfield said. “DTSC is expected to work with the port on more aspects of its ongoing waterfront.”
San Pedro continued

The revitalization plan extends from the port’s inner harbor cruise facilities to Cabrillo Beach in the outer harbor. It would create eight miles of waterfront promenade on the mainland, 27 acres of park space and three new harbors for cruise ships, in addition to the expanded Ports O’ Call Village.

If completed, the makeover could create 14,300 construction jobs and 7,000 permanent jobs and generate $30.3 million in new tax revenue, according to an Environmental Impact report prepared for the Port of Los Angeles.

DTSC is presiding over the cleanup of four parcels on Terminal Island that were historically used for repairing ships. It is one of the oldest repair facilities at the port, and figured prominently in World War II. Today, it is a popular location for Hollywood filmmakers.

The main chemicals of concern are lead, arsenic, PCBs and petroleum hydrocarbons. The shallow groundwater is not significantly affected, but isolated sources of contamination will be removed. There is no immediate health risk to humans.

The cleanup plan proposed by the port would excavate 680 truckloads of contaminated soil. The public has until July 24, 2013, to comment on the cleanup plan.

San Pedro isn’t the only place where DTSC is helping boost the economy along California’s waterfronts.

The department also is helping prepare Brooklyn Basin and Alameda Point, both in Alameda County, for redevelopment. Together, the three projects will create billions of dollars of new value.

Economic development professionals tout the importance of “value added” production. That’s what DTSC does: it adds value, while also preserving the environment.