

**ENHANCING AND MODERNIZING DTSC's
PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

**Summary of Stakeholder Comments and
Preliminary Ideas for Improvement**

**Prepared for the State of California
Department of Toxic Substances Control**

January 13, 2016

ABOUT THE UC DAVIS EXTENSION COLLABORATION CENTER

Since 1990, the Collaboration Center has been working with community, university, government and private-sector leaders to improve collaborative decision-making and create long-lasting solutions that serve the people and needs of California, and beyond.

In order to accomplish this work, the Collaboration Center provides facilitation and mediation services, professional education and training, and informs community engagement efforts through research. The Center's highly regarded services engage multi-stakeholder groups in decision-making processes focused on environmental justice and health, hazardous waste, natural resource management and policy, water resources, watershed management, land use, among other public policy topics.

The Center has helped a wide range of clients to achieve successful solutions on a diverse range of issues in the public and private sector. Our professional team at the Center is made up of recognized leaders in community engagement, facilitation, conflict resolution, and engaged research based at the University of California at Davis.

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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW, POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has undertaken this initiative to enhance and modernize the department's public outreach and community engagement practices and strategies. In April 2015, DTSC engaged the UC Davis Extension Collaboration Center to work with stakeholders as the basis for developing recommendations for achieving these goals.

A multi-faceted approach was taken to develop the potential actions summarized in this report. This included: stakeholder interviews; observations of DTSC public events; review of relevant reports and policy documents; analysis of outreach practices employed by other agencies and organizations with similar missions both within and outside California; and the professional experience and expertise of the UC Davis team. The next phase of the project will provide greater detail on the "how" and practical steps that support each potential action.

Interviews targeted two broad groups with diverse viewpoints. One group included *internal* stakeholders: DTSC senior leadership, public participation and technical staff, advisors/consultants, and California EPA leadership. The second group included a broad range of *external* stakeholders, with particular focus on persons who live or work in impacted communities. These included: community residents, tribes, State and local environmental justice organizations and networks, non-profit organizations, as well as advisers to the State Legislature and private companies who interface with DTSC's permitting, enforcement, and clean-up programs. More than a dozen Department staff and 25 external stakeholders were interviewed from July through August 2015, many of whom represented larger groups with a wide-range of constituencies.

Many of those interviewed indicated they are pleased with some of the initial actions of DTSC Director, Barbara Lee, including creating the position of Assistant Director for Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs. Many stakeholders cite: (1) improved efforts by staff and leadership to convey information to interested parties; (2) positive intentions; (3) genuine interest in trying to be more responsive to public concerns; (4) and a willingness to listen and enhance their efforts. Yet most of those interviewed also believe improvements are necessary for the Department to fully meet its mission, beginning with how it interacts with impacted communities and stakeholders.

In general terms, key issues identified by stakeholders where the potential for improvement exists and change is needed include:

1. General distrust and lack of transparency on how decisions are made
2. Lack of opportunities for meaningful public input on decisions made by the Department
3. Long lapses in action and communication by DTSC associated with certain sites
4. General lack of confidence in public participation practices by the Department
5. Insufficient resources allocated to public participation, especially at more complex sites
6. Difficulty obtaining, or disagreement with, the information used as the basis for decision making
7. Limited responses to serious concerns expressed about certain decisions.

Based on the initial data collection phase of this project, 27 potential ideas or "actions" have been developed in an attempt to address these issues. Each one of these action ideas needs further analysis, study and vetting to ensure that it will lead to the most valuable outcome. The next phase of the project is to convene a series of focus groups and small workshops involving a wide range of stakeholders to obtain their feedback on these possible actions, and to refine and augment the actions. The feedback

received during this process will help the UC Davis project team develop a set of final recommendations to be considered by DTSC for implementation.

Potential actions are divided into three categories based on a sense of what can be most immediately accomplished with the greatest positive impact, and what might take additional time and resources to develop and implement or require additional study. It is important to note that DTSC has not been waiting for this initiative to be completed before taking preliminary actions to improve its public engagement practices. DTSC is anticipating taking action on several of the actions identified as soon as stakeholder feedback is obtained. Other actions have been in the process of being developed based on previously identified needs (e.g., improvements in public involvement associated with the permitting process).

The following table summarizes the potential actions identified at this point in the process:

Potential Actions

<p><u>Actions Underway or Anticipated to Begin Immediately</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure early outreach to impacted communities 2. Ensure public participation plans are developed and implemented before the process of developing preferred alternatives 3. Ensure communities have access to relevant information upon which decisions will be made 4. Enhance public involvement in the permitting process 5. Develop and implement community-tailored approaches to communicating with stakeholders 6. Develop and implement clear and transparent policies for ongoing communications throughout the course of a project 7. Continue and enhance support for community reporting platforms 8. Develop and convene community trainings and workshops to help match public expectations with regulatory and policy realities 9. Develop a comprehensive “Citizen’s Guide to Working with DTSC”
<p><u>Short-term Actions</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Create a statewide plan for hazardous waste reduction 11. Develop and reinforce an organizational culture that prioritizes and values public participation best practices among all DTSC staff 12. Establish a DTSC “Community Representatives Committee” to provide input on public participation practices and policies 13. Enhance relationships with Tribal governments 14. Work more closely with local communities to better align public expectations with the intended objectives of public meetings 15. Involve public participation specialists in creating project budgets 16. Improve the general navigability and information on the DTSC website, including an improved calendar of public events 17. Develop a DTSC Environmental Justice Webpage 18. Refine EnviroStor to be more user-friendly 19. Identify and develop online tools for enhancing public engagement

	20. Update the DTSC Public Participation Manual
<u>Longer-term Actions</u>	21. Create an “Office of Public Participation and Environmental Justice” that reports to the DTSC Director 22. Engage stakeholders in the development of DTSC policies or regulations impacting communities through the use of Policy Dialogues or Regulatory Negotiations 23. Commit to a Facilitative Leadership model 24. Augment funding for independent technical assistance and testing for communities 25. Establish a system of transparency and accountability similar to other state agencies 26. Pursue additional funding from the Legislature, including funds earmarked for public participation 27. Revise the composition of Community Advisory Groups

Some of these potential actions can be implemented in the near future, as they do not entail significant costs and are under the decision making authority of the DTSC Director and do not require external action. Others will require a longer lead time to fully develop and implement. All potential actions build around reinforcing organization-wide change, reflected in an evolving organizational culture that demonstrates value placed on public participation best practices. A key underlying premise is that the desired organizational change, to be sustainable, will require consistent reinforcement at the highest DTSC leadership levels. A rigorous training/capacity building program for DTSC is also anticipated to reinforce the full range of best practices recommended.

The next phase of this project is to convene focus groups and workshops with the primary purpose of obtaining feedback on the potential actions and the best way to proceed. Feedback sought will include:

- 1) The extent to which the potential actions address the primary concerns of various stakeholders
- 2) Revisions or other actions which might be considered to address primary stakeholder concerns more effectively
- 3) Ideas about the placement of actions into the three categories as they represent stakeholder priorities
- 4) Ways in which stakeholders can engage with/support DTSC in achieving improvements to its public involvement/engagement activities and practices.

The UC Davis project team will be planning and coordinating focus groups with various communities and stakeholder groups in early January, with the intent of completing this phase of the project by the end of February.

The remainder of this report provides additional background on the process, and information gained in developing this list of potential actions. Observations from stakeholders are highlighted which serve as the basis for the actions identified. Likewise, an initial list of potential implementation strategies is provided to identify the kinds of activities which could be undertaken to achieve the intent of the actions proposed.

II. BACKGROUND AND APPROACH TO DEVELOPING POTENTIAL ACTIONS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This report has been prepared for the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) in an effort to enhance its public involvement and community engagement practices. The Department has been experiencing significant levels of concern and scrutiny from communities, advocacy groups, the California Legislature, and other stakeholders. As the stakeholder interviews bear out, these concerns are based on several factors: DTSC's perceived low level of public trust; its perceived lack of transparency and reluctance to communicate with the public; frequent turnover in executive leadership; historical underfunding; and dissatisfaction of many stakeholders in DTSC's ability to effectively communicate and carry out its mission and vision.

The mission of the 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."

The Department's vision is that:

"Californians enjoy a clean and healthy environment, and as a result of our efforts: communities are confident that we protect them from toxic harm; businesses are confident that we engage them with consistency and integrity; consumers are confident that we stimulate innovation in the development of safer products."

These are lofty and very challenging goals to achieve, especially given chronic underfunding and frequent leadership changes. Despite these challenges, DTSC has been working for several years to strengthen deficiencies in administrative and technical processes and practices, and address issues of concern to the public. To this end, DTSC launched an initiative called "Fixing the Foundation" in early 2012. DTSC proceeded with the CPS HR Consulting Permitting Process Review and Analysis report, and the development of the 2-year Permitting Enhancement Work Plan. To augment these improvement efforts, in April 2015, DTSC engaged the UC Davis Extension Collaboration Center to produce a set of potential actions (which follow) to enhance and modernize the Department's public outreach and engagement strategies.

UC Davis Extension's work includes the following tasks:

- (1) Conduct stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and research on DTSC's stakeholder engagement programs and explore best practices;
- (2) Review existing documents and materials related to DTSC's programs and practices, as well as programs and practices from other similar agencies
- (3) Draft and finalize a report with recommendations to improve DTSC's public outreach and engagement work
- (4) Assist DTSC in implementing recommendations.

The potential actions in this report are based largely on the results of stakeholder interviews, including insights from representatives of impacted communities, tribes, nonprofit organizations, the State Legislature, private industry, and staff from DTSC and the California EPA. In addition, the potential actions are based on UC Davis' observations of DTSC public workshops/events; review of relevant

policies, reports, and materials; analysis of public engagement practices conducted by other organizations with similar missions; and its decades of experience leading public involvement processes for numerous local, state and federal agencies.

To successfully engage with stakeholders, DTSC has recognized it must improve and modernize its public outreach public involvement/engagement activities and practices. Most of those interviewed also believe significant change is needed for the Department to meet its mission, beginning with how it interacts with impacted communities. Change under any circumstances can be challenging, and it can be particularly difficult for government agencies. They often undergo frequent leadership changes, and the organizational culture of many agencies can make it difficult for new leadership to effect changes. “Bureaucratic inertia” makes change even more difficult, as many internal systems reinforce the status quo. Nonetheless, DTSC leadership is committed to improving its public involvement practices.

APPROACH TO DEVELOPING POTENTIAL ACTIONS

This report should be reviewed and evaluated in the context of the many challenges facing DTSC, many of which have been noted above. Stakeholder interviews point to both positive and negative perceptions of the Department. Barbara Lee, Director of DTSC, and other leaders in the Department have demonstrated support for enhancing the Department’s public participation activities through a variety of actions. Many recognize these actions yet hope more will be done to engage impacted communities more effectively and meaningfully. The potential actions in this report are intended to focus on ways in which public engagement in impacted communities can be improved and modernized beyond activities already underway.

It is also important to recognize that this report builds primarily on broadly held issues and consistent themes raised by stakeholders, while attempting to acknowledge the key issues identified in relevant documents and correspondence (e.g. reports and letters by The People’s Senate and the California Environmental Justice Coalition). Ultimately, the potential actions identified focus on practical solutions to improving DTSC’s public involvement policies, programs, guiding statutes and regulations, and public perceptions.

The “Observations and Potential Actions” section of this report highlights the stakeholder input and observations that led to the formation of potential ideas for improvements. Each action also has a “Path to Implementation” section which provides initial ideas on possible strategies for achieving intended outcomes.

In reviewing this document it is also important to note differences in the language used to describe public involvement. Public involvement is significantly different from public information and public relations. It is also different from public outreach. “Public Outreach” can suggest a Department’s interest in providing information to the public, but does not necessarily connote the additional level of effort required for meaningful “Public Involvement” or “Public Participation.” The latter two terms suggest a higher level of engagement and as such are used in place of “Public Outreach” in this document since they more accurately represent what DTSC hopes to accomplish.

A full range of approaches are encompassed in the potential actions. These include:

STRUCTURAL ENHANCEMENTS

One critical step toward improving and enhancing DTSC’s Public Participation program is identifying potential changes to DTSC’s organizational structure. Such potential actions potentially form the foundation for rebuilding trust and transparency in DTSC’s general operations and Public Participation program. While change at this level can be challenging, improved organizational structure translates into improved organizational culture and clearer definition of priorities.

POLICY MODIFICATIONS

A range of internal policy decisions can also be made which in a relatively short period of time can lead to marked improvements in stakeholder interaction and perceptions. In particular, near-term improvements in working relationships with highly impacted communities and environmental justice groups, tribes and community advocates will send the signal that improved public involvement is in fact a priority of the Department.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

While longer term in nature, and not under the sole purview of the Department, most stakeholders believe DTSC needs additional resources to enhance its Public Participation strategies . Furthermore, interviewees recommend improving internal mechanisms for determining funding for site-by-site public engagement activities so adequate resources are provided.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM “BEST PRACTICES”

DTSC’s public participation practices receive intense scrutiny as they represent the “public face” of the Department. If public meetings and interactions proceed smoothly, professionally, productively, and provide stakeholders with a sense that their input is meaningful, this reflects well on DTSC. But if not, these interactions undermine not only public involvement initiatives, but the credibility of the Department as a whole as perceived by many. As such, improving Public Participation “best practices” will bolster the effectiveness and consistency of public participation practices and reflect well on the Department.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH IMPACTED STAKEHOLDERS

While part of best practices, clear and effective communication is sufficiently critical to highlight separately. Most stakeholders interviewed highlighted the need for improved communications protocols. Communications in this context does not so much refer to traditional public relations and public information practices, but to opportunities for effective and meaningful, two-way communication as discussed in DTSC’s Public Participation Manual.

DTSC STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

Another key issue raised during interviews is the capacity of DTSC staff to handle the complex and sensitive settings in which they often work. Stakeholders suggested that some staff members would benefit from additional training for engaging effectively with the public in these challenging situations. Working in what are often very challenging interpersonal and group settings, Public Participation Specialists need ongoing training to ensure they have the skills to effectively address the broad cross-

section of situations they encounter. Likewise, there is a general perception that many technical presentations do not transmit critical information effectively. More can be done to build the capacity of and support DTSC Public Participation staff.

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY IN DECISION-MAKING

When community members can effectively participate in decision-making processes, they are more likely to buy-in to the processes, and often make meaningful contributions for improvements. Such involvement advises DTSC, as well as potential permittees, provides a greater opportunity for all parties to understand the potential implications of decisions being considered, reduces uncertainty, and often reduces protracted conflicts caused by miscommunication, misinformation, or misperceptions. As such, an investment in community capacity building can pay significant and multiple dividends.

COMPREHENSIVE AND USER-FRIENDLY ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

DTSC's website and associated electronic forms of communication offer a visible means for conveying the importance the Department places on public involvement and environmental justice. Electronic forms of communication which are difficult to access or navigate, however, send a message that the information and the issues it addresses are not a high priority. Today, websites and other forms of electronic communications also act as the face of an organization, sending a signal of clarity and professionalism, or confusion and "being behind the times." Therefore, improving these forms of communication warrants attention and adequate resources.

With this as the backdrop, the next step in finalizing these potential actions is for internal and external stakeholders to review and comment on this draft report as the basis for providing feedback through email, focus groups, and stakeholder workshops.

The UC Davis team is grateful to those interviewed for their candor, time, and willingness to share their experiences. The UC Davis team also appreciates the openness of DTSC staff and management and their willingness to seek improvements.

III. OBSERVATIONS AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

For this project, DTSC has essentially asked for a “360-degree evaluation.” This is not an easy step for an Department to take, as it opens the door to critique and to considering major changes, some of which may not be envisioned at the inception of the project. The willingness to have its public participation program reviewed and critiqued from all angles – especially from community residents and advocates who live and work in impacted communities – is, in itself, a demonstration of DTSC’s attempt to be more responsive to stakeholder concerns. For the UC Davis team, which is listening to a wide range of stakeholders, and hearing a broad range of comments and suggestions, it requires a level of both honesty and grace.

All potential actions identified build on the foundational belief that effectively engaging the public is part of “good government,” where agencies work closely with the stakeholders they serve. These potential actions identify how DTSC can improve public involvement through expanded “best practices” – processes that enhance the effectiveness and meaningfulness of public involvement.

The potential actions identified are also intended to provide a blueprint for enhancing DTSC’s credibility, efficiency, transparency, and overall effectiveness in achieving its very challenging and crucially important mission. Building trust requires ongoing vigilance with a set of well-defined and consistently implemented public involvement practices that are applied, evaluated and improved on a regular basis. Improved transparency, which helps build trust, revolves around ongoing, regular and accurate communication, incorporating protocols for responding to concerns voiced by stakeholders. Effectiveness is often measured by whether stakeholders feel they have had a legitimate opportunity to share their views, and the basis for their views, with clarity from the Department that their views were heard and evaluated as part of the decision making process.

To reflect how the timing of implementing these potential actions might work out they are divided into three primary categories:

- 1) Immediate actions where some activity is already occurring or anticipated to begin immediately upon completion of this project
- 2) Short-term actions that provide significant impact, but which will require external interfaces or additional allocation of resources
- 3) Longer-term actions which provide enhanced value, but will likely take longer to implement for a variety of reasons, such as additional research and vetting, additional resources, external decisions and actions, time needed to properly develop and implement ideas, or even new legislation.

A. ACTIONS UNDERWAY OR ANTICIPATED

A number of activities are currently underway within DTSC to address some of the issues identified by stakeholders related to improving public participation. In particular, efforts are being focused on how to improve public involvement in the permitting process for facilities involved in the treatment, storage or transfer of hazardous waste. Other actions are ones that DTSC believes can be implemented relatively quickly upon completion of the project. This categorization does not necessarily suggest that short and longer term potential actions are less important, but rather that DTSC can likely respond most quickly to these initial 10 actions, especially given their potential impact.

1. Ensure early outreach to impacted communities

Observations: Currently, the public is typically notified of project activities when a decision by DTSC is imminent. As a result, hearing about proposed projects late in the process creates issues associated with trust and transparency, and little opportunity is available to express concerns and date/information related to those concerns. This undermines effective public involvement. Without early contact with the impacted community it is also difficult to ascertain the best ways to ensure good communication using the styles of communication to which the community is accustomed. As a result, many people may feel left out and uninformed, again undermining effective public involvement, trust and transparency.

Path to Implementation:

- Develop guidelines for screening upcoming permit actions through CalEnviroScreen (or similar cumulative impacts screening tools), flagging all activities in identified impacted communities and requiring notice to the EJ/Tribal and Public Participation staff.
- Develop a policy for engaging with relevant government agencies on issues beyond DTSC's jurisdiction to help address community concerns which might be outside DTSC's purview or areas of expertise, summarizing results to upload to EnviroStor.
- Make this part of a formal framework for addressing environmental justice interests and concerns early in the permitting process.¹
- Utilize a common permit data base where technical permit staff and public participation staff can share information and develop a system for flagging permits early, determining if an enhanced public process is needed.
- Permit staff need to route upcoming permits they are working on to public participation staff; possibly an intake staff or "clearinghouse" function might be established for each of the units to ensure early coordination.
- While not every permit requires extensive public interaction, each needs to be examined to determine if there are environmental justice issues, impacted communities or likely high levels of controversy or scrutiny.

2. Ensure public participation plans are developed and implemented before the process of developing preferred alternatives and solutions

Observations: Many of those interviewed expressed concern their comments were not taken into account and did not influence DTSC decision-making. Stakeholders noted that on some occasions DTSC staff started on the alternatives development phase of a project – and even the process of selecting the preferred alternative – before public engagement had begun in earnest. When the public finally had the opportunity for input, DTSC has already committed to a basic course of action. In these cases, many members of the public felt their input was of limited value, which then leads to frustration, distrust and alienation. A thorough community assessment, **very early in the process**, provides the information needed on which to base a well-crafted Public Participation Plan.

Path to Implementation: DTSC could adopt policies that ensure public scoping occurs, especially on highly complex or sensitive projects, along with the development of a public participation plan, prior to beginning work on any solutions or alternatives. The determination of highly complex or sensitive

actions should be guided by facility size and location, nature of toxic materials, population impacted, area potentially impacted and cumulative impacts.ⁱⁱ

Additionally:

- For each permit situation and case in which an impacted community is involved, environmental justice issues are at the fore, or a high level of controversy is likely, the public participation specialist should work with technical permit staff on a Community/Stakeholder Assessment that can lead to and guide the Public Participation Plan; these documents can be readily shared with an internal “drop box” type function connected to the permit data base.
- An assessment includes trying to answer a series of questions that are unique to each situation, such as: what are the key issues; who are the important stakeholders; what data are available and what are missing/not yet known; what capacities do the stakeholders have to interact and to work with technical data; how can those capacities be enhanced; what is the timeline and what are the best approaches for public interaction and the best venues; what outreach media are most useful (web, Facebook, newspaper, radio, local newsletters, etc.); among others.
- Sources of data include reading existing documents related to the site and the community; press clippings and articles; talking to other staff who have worked in the location; conducting interviews with key stakeholder and community leaders; among others.

3. Ensure that communities have access to relevant information upon which decisions will be made

Observations: One of the key concerns expressed by many of those interviewed is the need to improve access to information and data used for decision-making and analysis. Likewise, better outreach is needed for meetings/workshops that could expand the public’s awareness and understanding of the issues, as well their participation in decision-making. When the data used as the basis for decision making is not made available in an understandable format prior to any final decisions being made, the public is left to wonder about the credibility, thoroughness and accuracy of analyses. This again affects trust and is counter to efforts to ensure transparency in the decision making process.

Path to Implementation: Potential ideas include:

- An increase in materials and staff who speak Spanish and other key languages spoken by residents in impacted communities
- Broader outreach to local organizations and local governments
- Mandatory public participation plans should include a community profile (instead of separate documents)
- Webcasting all public meetings and making the recordings available on DTSC’s website
- Increased web and social media outreach in English and Spanish/other key languages
- Sending press releases (differentiated from public notices) to local newspaper as part of outreach
- Key information and data should be made available and accessible in appropriate formats (e.g., written, electronic, video, etc.) that are attuned to community members.

4. Enhance public involvement in the permitting process

Observations: Currently, the public encounters several challenges engaging with DTSC during permitting processes. Often the public does not fully understand how the permitting process works, and this results in frustration and distrust. Likewise, the permit application is not commonly shared with the Public Participation Branch and the permit applicant typically conducts only the minimum outreach required by law to hold a pre-application public meeting. DTSC is aware of these problems so has already begun working to identify ways to improve public involvement associated with the permitting process. DTSC is charting the entire process, clarifying how DTSC can better convey the permitting process to the public, and when/how the public can best engage with the permittee and DTSC during the process.

Path to Implementation: Complete developing a draft of the enhanced public involvement process as the basis for discussion with stakeholders during the review of this report. Policy and regulatory changes are likely to achieve desired outcomes.

5. Develop and implement community-tailored approaches to communicating with stakeholders

Observations: Both external stakeholders and Department staff have acknowledged that communications with local communities needs to be tailored to the specific needs of that community. While some stakeholders find little value in newspaper ads or radio announcements, these remain valuable in other communities. As such, a complete “toolbox” of methods needs to be available to connect to communities and residents (e.g., newspaper ads, press releases, radio announcements, mailings, door-to-door canvassing, social media, cell phone apps, and other electronic modes of communication, etc., which are well documented in numerous publications). However, some of these tools are currently required as a matter of outdated legislation, which can result in resources being expended for an outreach tool that is relatively ineffective for a particular community. This results in limited benefits and expenditure of time and resources that could be reallocated to more effective outreach tools. As such, legislative language should be updated to be less prescriptive so it can flex with changing times and communications choices based on sites-specific needs and common practices with each community, while maintaining Department accountability.

Path to Implementation: Proposed strategies include:

- Initiate regulatory reform to eliminate prescriptive public outreach requirements that may be ineffective or outdated, while incorporating safeguards to ensure DTSC works with local communities to identify the most effective and scope of outreach
- Have Public Participation Specialists work with community members at specific sites to ascertain the preferred approaches for communication; this should be an important aspect of community assessments
- Based on the above, develop a catalogue to document preferences of specific communities as a resource for DTSC, communities, and other stakeholders.

6. Implement clear and transparent policies for ongoing communications throughout the course of a project

Observations: Community stakeholders shared stories of long delays in patterns of communication. In some instances, those interviewed cited little or no communication from the Department until a decision had essentially been made, at least from the public’s perspective. In other instances, lack of communication resulted in last minute cancellations of activities or poorly advertised and attended meetings that might have been avoided if the community had been engaged in planning. Some perceive that only after communities apply pressure on DTSC does the Department share key information that responds to public concerns or explains the reasons for delays. These patterns reflect a lack of transparency which impacts public perceptions of trust and credibility.

Another concern raised by stakeholders is that often those who have provided comments receive no response. The Public Participation Manual highlights that “a response to comments must be prepared whenever DTSC seeks formal public input on a decision” associated with a permit application, closure plan, site remediation plan or permit modification. The public, however, generally expects DTSC to do more than comply with the letter of the law, reflecting that the Department values what can be learned from public input.

Path to Implementation: DTSC should adopt an internal policy outlining Department-wide public participation communication guidelines and protocols, includingⁱⁱⁱ:

- Providing sufficient lead time before meetings (at least three weeks) with an opportunity for interested stakeholders to obtain and review raw data
- Establishing norms for early and ongoing communications (such as always preparing the community assessment and public participation plan before any technical work on solutions begins; based on input from the community, weekly Facebook updates, easily accessible calendar of activities associated with a project, monthly meetings; etc.)
- Specifying a mutually agreed upon length of time between DTSC and community representatives for DTSC to provide requested information to those who made the request
- Establishing a distribution list for regular communications that includes multiple public groups, nonprofits, elected public officials, and the general public in the site vicinity
- Ensuring public comments are received and responded to in the early stages of a decision-making process, as well as other critical review periods throughout the course a project
- Ensuring all public comments sought on potential outcomes of permitting or cleanup receive one of three responses: how the comment resulted in impacting the decision making process; why the comment did not impact the decision process; or the comment has been taken under advisement and is the subject of further consideration (requiring an additional response once analyzed)
- Incorporating performance measures related to communication with stakeholders linked to personnel performance evaluations to demonstrate accountability for good communication with the public and various stakeholders.

7. Continue and enhance support for community reporting platforms

Observations: The Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN, <http://ivanonline.org>) community monitoring and reporting systems has filled an expressed need in communities to build community capacity to identify and address environmental hazards. Likewise, the tool has enhanced collaboration with multiple local, regional, State and federal agencies to problem-solve issues that were not clearly addressed by a single agency or department. It is important that DTSC continue to participate in IVAN networks State-wide, and provide resources to help these networks succeed long-term.

Path to Implementation: Approaches to accomplishing this recommendation include:

- DTSC staff continue to participate in monthly IVAN network meetings and provide support to address environmental hazards raised through the online platform
- Provide financial resources to support community and Department problem-solvers in each network, and to ensure the sustainability and growth of these/similar networks statewide.

8. Develop and convene community trainings and workshops

Observations: Few community residents and advocates have the time and resources available to independently study DTSC's permitting, enforcement, and/or clean-up processes to effectively engage in regulatory and policy decisions. That said, external stakeholders expressed significant interest in attending trainings that could provide a better understanding of these processes. Some stakeholders emphasized that these trainings should be organized in partnership with environmental organizations and environmental justice groups established in communities, while potentially providing a stipend/honorarium for their work. The reasons shared for this partnership and stipend include:

- Partnerships help build trust and mutual understanding between DTSC and the community
- Stipends supports the environmental justice group's investment of resources to host the training
- Environmental justice groups can more effectively outreach to community residents
- Groups can ensure that the design of the materials and delivery of the training are accessible to residents, and provide translation and interpretation services
- Furthermore, by working in partnership with local and other organizations priority workshop topics can be identified, as well as the best times and locations for meetings. Also, multiple offerings might be provided to ensure broad participation.

The US EPA's Office of Research and Development provides a good example of the variety of topics that can be included in a regular webinar series, such as air quality basics, air pollution monitoring, how to start a citizen science program, citizen science study design, how to obtain funding, what to look for in a sensor, sensor applications and performance goals, how to collect useful data using sensors, data management and quality, maintaining sensors, and interpreting and communicating data. These types of webinars teach interested citizens how to become more involved with their local environment's protection and how to make change within their community.

Path to Implementation:

- Create an internal policy with annual training goals and financial and staff resources to support adequate planning, preparation and execution of workshops.

- Establish an annual workshop budget including stipends/honoraria for environmental/environmental justice partners.
- Incorporate trainings that include activities in communities, in addition to webinars, with copies of all trainings easily accessible on the DTSC website.^{iv}
- Work with community members and other stakeholders through Public Participation Specialists, and in the process of developing Public Participation Plans, to identify potential stakeholder-valued workshops.

9. Develop a comprehensive Citizen’s Guide to Working with DTSC

Observations: DTSC currently provides two citizen guides on its website: Removal Action Work Plan Process and Remedial Action Plan. These citizen guides do not provide much information on how community members can become involved and instead just list the steps of each process. Offering a more comprehensive Citizen’s Guide will better inform citizens who are not familiar with decision-making processes and help them become more involved. This would also reinforce how citizens can be more effectively involved and that DTSC is committed to transparency in decision making. It would also assist in creating a more realistic sense of how the public can be involved at various stages in a project which would contribute to having a clearer expectations about the impact of their involvement.

Path to Implementation: Create a “Citizen’s Guide to Working with DTSC” that covers the various programs, including permitting, enforcement, and clean-up, and how stakeholders can appropriately engage in decision-making processes. A good example is the State Water Boards’ “Citizen’s Guide to Working with the California Water Boards” (www.swrcb.ca.gov/publications_forms/publications). Another example is Alabama’s Citizen Participation Guide (www.adem.alabama.gov/moreInfo/pubs/citizensguide.pdf).

Additional strategies include:

- Making it available online in a searchable format
- Preparing a Spanish version
- Initiate a marketing campaign to highlight its availability
- Provide for public input on its development to make sure it is user-friendly and meets citizen needs.

B. SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

These potential actions are considered important to the goals of this initiative, but will take longer to implement and will require additional study and analysis. These potential actions are not necessarily less important than ongoing or immediate actions, but additional resources and time are anticipated for their full development and implementation.

10. Create a Statewide Plan for hazardous waste reduction

Observations: Many interviewees noted that California does not currently have either a State-wide hazardous waste management target or a comprehensive reduction and management plan. This means there are no targets for how much hazardous waste is allowed, where waste can be stored, or any comprehensive specifications for reducing the amount of waste generated and stored. This forces DTSC

to decide on a case-by-case basis to grant permits for current and new facilities, and how cleanup plans impact State-wide reduction goals.

This has a direct impact on public engagement in two primary ways. First, without a long-term, holistic approach to hazardous waste management which sets priorities for reducing hazardous materials, the public has little confidence and trust in how DTSC is approaching its priorities, and where their communities fit into the picture. Second, there is no benchmark for the public to gauge what is realistic, and no context for understanding longer-term goals. This can lead to unrealistic expectations from the public, and then when those expectations are not met, the credibility of the Department is questioned.

This action reinforces current efforts to develop a State-wide plan for hazardous waste with clear measurements of how much waste and where that waste can be stored, and an action plan for reducing the amount of waste California both generates and stores. The public should be involved in developing this plan so DTSC has an opportunity to hear the ideas and concerns of the public.

As articulated in the list of potential actions from the California Environmental Justice Coalition's October 1, 2014 letter to Governor Brown:

"That plan shall identify policies for (1) reducing the use of hazardous materials in California, and (2) preventing new contamination of soil, buildings, and other environmental media by hazardous materials. The plan shall not rely for meeting the target on (1) any proposal that would result in reduced cleanup of contaminated sites, including 'leave-in-place' or on-site disposal, (2) techniques that merely reduce the volume of the hazardous waste and not the quantity of hazardous material in the waste, (3) redefining hazardous waste so that materials that are currently considered hazardous wastes are no longer defined as such, or (4) shipping the waste out of state."

Path to Implementation: Opportunities for public input into the development of the plan should be provided so the public is aware of the initiative and DTSC can benefit from hearing from the public during the preparation of the plan. This will strengthen the plan as well as help the Department understand stakeholder perspectives that could impact future public participation activities. This could also be the subject of a negotiated rulemaking or policy dialogue process to provide an open and transparent forum in which stakeholders can be involved.

11. Develop an organizational culture among all DTSC staff that prioritizes and values knowledge of public involvement and public communication skills

Observations: Many stakeholders identified perceived challenges faced by DTSC staff in communicating with public audiences, especially community residents. Some specific challenges that were noted are: not having a full appreciation for or valuing public involvement; not having a thorough understanding of and sensitivity to environmental justice communities and public health concerns; and, not always communicating clearly with the public, especially involving technical/risk information; among others. The net result is that many stakeholders believe the Department underestimates what is needed for effective public involvement and does not place a high priority on engaging the public in a meaningful way.

Path to Implementation: DTSC should adopt a variety of capacity building practices, including:

- Directives from executive leadership reinforcing the intention to develop an organization-wide commitment to enhanced public involvement

- Identify DTSC staff across departments who have strong public communication skills (writing, speaking, presenting, responding to community concerns) and can participate effectively in community meetings, representing the broader interests of the Department in demonstrating good faith efforts to be responsive to public concerns and issues; support these individuals with continued education in intermediate and advanced public communication skills; continue to build this “roster” of public presenters so that eventually everyone has an opportunity to develop these skills
- Provide regular training for all staff on environmental justice and challenges from both the DTSC and communities’ perspectives on projects related to the Department; these trainings should involve members of environmental justice communities and advocacy groups as trainers
- Provide regular training on public engagement, involvement and conflict resolution “best practices;” make the training available to all staff engaging with stakeholders, including permit and technical staff
- Continue with improved/enhanced risk communication training, ensuring all project staff have an opportunity to receive this training
- Include in all DTSC staff position duty statements language on the need for public and risk communications skills
- Link staff performance evaluations to demonstration of increased awareness and implementation of public participation and environmental justice “best practices”
- Provide an internal awards program for exemplary public outreach and communication, and also provide a tangible job incentive program for the same.

12. Establish a DTSC “Community Representatives Committee” to provide input on public participation practices and policies

Observations: Community residents and advocates have identified various examples where they believe that DTSC’s recent public participation practices need to be enhanced to achieve “meaningful” community engagement. The following problem areas were identified:

- (1) Not providing relevant information about public health concerns to communities
- (2) Limiting outreach efforts to save costs
- (3) Inaccurate representation of data to the public
- (4) Conflict of interests for staff investigating sites
- (5) Arguing that DTSC did not have jurisdiction when stakeholders present credible evidence otherwise
- (6) Sites in high-income communities receive more resources for public engagement and investigations than sites located in low-income communities.

As a response, several persons interviewed identified the value of creating an independent review body of public participation practices and policies, made up of residents who live in communities impacted by sites regulated by DTSC. Currently, there is a bill in committee (SB 673) which proposes the establishment of a similar body referred to as the “DTSC California Communities Committee.” According to the bill, this committee would be composed of 13 members representing residents affected by hazardous waste. The proposed committee has two roles: (1) to provide information on the concerns of impacted communities and input on outreach activities; and (2) to make potential actions for changes in

policies, produces and standards to increase public participation and transparency in decision-making. This action supports the formation of this committee, or a similar body, to reinforce the higher value and need placed on public participation associated with hazardous waste facilities.

Path to Implementation: This will require statutory action or a major policy initiative. A policy initiative would reflect the internal value placed on having such a group assist the Department as it seeks to improve public involvement, rather than being required to do so by legislative action.

Other ideas for implementation include:

- Solicit potential committee members from key stakeholder organizations and impacted communities
- Work with the Committee to develop a mission, charter and ground rules
- Prepare agendas, meeting materials and speakers well in advance and have that information available on a special part of the web site devoted to Committee meetings
- Advertise the meetings widely, make them very open to the public, record them (perhaps video) and make the recorded versions available to other stakeholders
- Use facilitation services so the meetings are well organized and well run
- Hold meetings at convenient times and locations around the State for convenience and to connect to communities
- Take the opportunity for mutual education; sharing with stakeholders what DTSC does and how its legal requirements and processes work; and learning from Committee members how better to engage and serve stakeholders.

13. Enhance relationships with Tribal governments

Observations: Tribal representatives expressed concerns that DTSC does not fully understand tribal laws and requirements and does not appropriately approach Tribes as sovereign nations, but as one of many public stakeholders. Federal and State laws and regulations specifically govern how tribes should be consulted. Governor Brown has also issued an Executive Order on how State agencies should work with tribes. The California EPA recently published a policy on consultation with California Native American Tribes. These policies and practices need to be incorporated into the day-to-day work of DTSC's Public Participation staff.

Path to Implementation: Provide an internal directive from the DTSC Director for project staff to:

- Recognize the sovereign status of Tribes and include them in government-to-government discussions and decision-making, as occurs with other government agencies
- Conduct training for all project managers, permitting and cleanup staff, and public participation specialists to become familiar with all government guidelines and appropriate protocols for engaging Tribes.

14. Work more closely with local communities to better align public expectations with the intended objectives of public meetings

Observations: Based on numerous stakeholder interviews, the basic purpose of many meetings – and the potential impact that can result from public input – is often not clear. Sometimes meetings are more about advising or educating the public, and input is minimal. When public expectations do not align with the intended purpose of a meeting, both members of the public and DTSC staff are placed in a

situation which typically leads to frustration and the sense that there time has been wasted. Worse yet, if the public believes it has been misled, this reflects back on issues of trust and transparency.

Path to Implementation: DTSC should adopt communication protocols which include clearly identifying the primary purpose of a meeting – awareness, education, feedback on a draft product, responses to a final product, etc. – and articulating the purpose and intended outcomes of all meetings well in advance. Working with community leaders to achieve this can help ensure a realistic alignment of public expectations about their role and contribution to the intended outcomes.

More specifically:

- List out the specific meeting objective right on the agenda that the public sees on the web site and at the meeting; repeat this objective as part of the introduction at the start of the meeting.
- Put specific objectives to each agenda item of substance – one phrase only
- Prior to a critical meeting where controversy is expected, make phone or email contact with a few key community leaders and stakeholders who are well connected (and plan to attend) to discuss the meeting, establish expectations and objectives and ask them to “pass the word” to others before the meeting
- Use ground rules or meeting protocols for all major meetings; these can be largely derived from a template or generic list, but sometimes customized to meet specific situations; these might even be posted on the web site as “good neighbor” type rules for public interactions
- Ensure timely follow through after meetings, including getting notes out in a timely manner, getting information requests taken care of, providing referrals, etc.

15. Involve Public Participation Specialists in creating project budgets

Observations: Currently, DTSC project managers, mostly with technical backgrounds, create budgets for specific sites’ public engagement work with little input from Public Participation Specialists. Typically, however, as would be expected, public participation specialists have a clearer understanding of the community dynamics near a site, what types of engagement are most appropriate, and what is involved in establishing a sound public participation plan.

Information gathered during interviews suggests that by having technical teams determine the budget for public engagement, unintended consequences result that can be avoided, such as: not allowing for early engagement, including briefings of stakeholders and elected officials; and underestimating the number of hours and resources needed for a meaningful public participation process; among others.

Path to Implementation: DTSC should adopt a policy directive requiring public participation specialists and their supervisors directly engage in the project budgeting process, with any differences to be resolved by executives in the Office of Public Participation and Environmental Justice.

When budgeting for a public participation process as part of a complex permit, the following tasks or steps should be accounted for:

- Community/Stakeholder Assessment including time for key stakeholder interviews
- Designing a suitable process to meet the specific and unique needs
- Possible use of an outside facilitator in special cases
- Educational phase with appropriate technical materials and presentation materials suited for the stakeholder audiences
- Sufficient funding for advertising, web content development, and related outreach materials.

16. Improve the general navigability and information on the DTSC website

Observations: General navigability and search functions of the current DTSC website have been noted as less than optimal. It is difficult to find information about specific programs or sites; and much of the information appears out of date. DTSC's current calendar is difficult to locate through the menu actions, hard to read, and does not provide sufficient information for the public. Moreover, the website is only available in English, which limits access to some residents. This provision will help "modernize" the use of electronic media to support DTSC's mission and interest in enhancing public involvement by better informing the public and increasing transparency and accessibility.

Path to Implementation: Suggested improvements include:

- Contract with a communications firm to better organize the website, present key and user-friendly information, and improve search functions
- Convene a focus group of DTSC stakeholders to provide ideas for improving the content and user-friendliness of the website
- Establish policies to provide regular updates to information on specific sites
- Enhance the website (all or key parts) by making it available in Spanish
- Include a link to the calendar on "quick links," and provide access to this menu on all pages.
- Improve readability (listings are cut off) and provide additional information including the event type, date, short description of the event, agenda, map, previous meeting minutes, etc.
- A good example is the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's calendar (www.adem.alabama.gov/newsevents/calendar/default.aspx)
- Include a toxic substances portal, including key information for stakeholders such as: FAQs, public health statements, community environmental health education presentations, and summaries of health effects, exposure, and potential actions; a good example to draw from is the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's portal (www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/index.asp).

17. Build a DTSC Environmental Justice webpage

Observations: Currently DTSC offers a short definition of environmental justice on its website, but does not provide any information on how the Department is actively incorporating environmental justice principles. It is important to build a more robust webpage to both communicate DTSC's commitment to environmental justice and to provide valuable tools to communities.

Path to Implementation: To reinforce DTSC's emphasis on environmental justice, ideas include:

- Edit the current webpage to include DTSC's commitment to environmental justice and the Department's plan to incorporate environmental justice into all of its programs
- Develop tools for environmental justice communities, and include descriptions and links
- Draw from examples such as: The New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Program (www.nj.gov/dep/ej/index.html); and the US EPA's Environmental Justice Program (www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice).

18. Refine EnviroStor to be more user-friendly

Observations: EnviroStor is the main database that DTSC uses to list all of its public information. This database is difficult to navigate, especially for first time users, and often provides out of date information or lacks key data. Improving the functionality and data on EnviroStor will allow the public to more accurately understand what is going on in their communities and therefore become more involved with the decision-making processes.

Path to Implementation: Two key steps are:

- Contract with an EnviroStor firm to enhance its navigability and organization of documents
- Establish policies to regularly update data and provide all relevant documents online.

19. Identify and develop online tools for enhancing public engagement

Observations: A wide variety of online tools have been developed in recent years to find new and perhaps better ways to engage the public in dialogue and problem solving. Appendix C identifies many of these tools. Use of some of these tools will be very site-specific. Many are designed to be used without extensive knowledge of electronic media, yet others require technical assistance. Some communities are becoming attuned to using such tools, whereas in other communities the use of such tools will be a challenge. So while these tools represent a new generation of approaches to public engagement, training of DTSC staff on the appropriate context for using these tools, and how to support their use, will be essential.

Before considering more technically sophisticated approaches, it would be useful to have a thorough, user-friendly permit and case data base accessible to permit staff and public participation staff. This would allow greater interaction between DTSC and the public, and should include not just technical information but also the Public Participation Plan, budget, meeting results, etc. Internally, tools such as a simple, accessible “drop box” function would be helpful to allow staff members from different units to work together on documents, spreadsheets, outreach materials, presentation, announcements etc, would be useful.

Many digital public involvement tools, such as Crowdbrite, Tell Us Tool Kit, Citizen Town Hall, and others likely will have some utility in certain situations. But, each of them is still dependent on someone carefully using the tool to match the situation (Community Assessment) and making sure that all the key data, materials and findings are present, the right stakeholders are identified and part of the dialogue, and stakeholder concerns are heard, understood and addressed. Utilizing basic “best practices” undergirds the use of any technological or modern tool.

Path to Implementation: As first steps, consider:

- Working with a technical consultant to gain a greater understanding of the appropriate uses, benefits and challenges of using these tools
- As the basis for proceeding, identify one or two communities to pilot the use of the tools, and based on learning from the pilot projects develop a general strategy for when and how to implement selected tools
- Work with community members as part of developing communications protocols to identify tools that would be valuable and applicable to specific situations.

20. Update the DTSC Public Participation Manual

Observations: The current DTSC Public Participation Manual was first written 14 years ago. It is a detailed document that has provided a framework for outlining public participation activities. Since 2011 DTSC has been planning to update the document, but limited resources allocated to this project have delayed progress. This recommendation simply reinforces the value of updating and streamlining the manual, while making it more user-friendly for DTSC staff and external stakeholders.

Path to Implementation: Consider outsourcing the revision to bring in external perspectives, while working closely with Department staff to ensure a thorough understanding of the contexts in which it is used.

Other considerations include:

- Make the Manual available on the website to the public as well as staff (for total transparency)
- Make it searchable by simple categories and key words
- Consolidate and streamline the current Manual, making it less prescriptive and more of a menu of public participation techniques and approaches and when to use them rather than a prescribed format and required activities for each situation.

C. LONGER-TERM ACTIONS

The following potential actions are considered longer-term due to the time and resources which will likely be needed to fully develop and implement them. As with short-term actions, these are not necessarily considered less valuable than those considered for immediate implementation, but they will necessitate additional study and confirmation, require a longer ramp-up period, need resources currently not allocated, or, for some, may even require new policy or legislative change.

21. Create the “Office of Public Participation and Environmental Justice” that reports to the DTSC Director

Observations: The DTSC Public Participation Manual states: “DTSC’s public participation program is not a public relations tool in the sense that public relations is a one-way communication. It is DTSC’s policy to create dialogue with all stakeholders to ensure that their concerns and priorities are incorporated into each project.” Yet, some stakeholders perceive DTSC Public Participation staff as more of a public relations or public information unit rather than community engagement. This works counter to the goal noted in the DTSC Public Participation Manual.

Currently, DTSC’s Public Participation staff are housed under the *Office of Communications* (along with Media Relations and Communications staff), four layers of leadership below the Director. This recommendation involves taking the public engagement functions from the *Office of Communications* and combining them with the functions under the recently formed *office of the Assistant Director for Environmental Justice*. This action would also help clarify – at the organizational level – the significant difference between the skills of a Public Participation Specialist and those of a general communications specialist, public relations specialist and a media specialist.

This new proposed office, the *Office of Public Participation and Environmental Justice*, could report to the DTSC Director (as does the Assistant Director for Environmental Justice currently). Having the newly expanded office report directly to the DTSC Director will emphasize the importance of integrating public engagement into all of the Department's activities. These two functions – public involvement and environmental justice – are so intertwined that having them in the same office ensures a greater sensitivity to each, greater interaction and communication, and the development of more Department-wide policies and emphases that can be more effectively reinforced through direct reporting to the Director.

Path to Implementation: Given relatively frequent changes in organizational structure in recent years, there may be some “fatigue” perceived with this potential action. However, since the two Offices are relatively small, and the shift to reporting directly to the Director is already in place for the Assistant Director of Environmental Justice, this action may not require changes cascading down the organizational structure.

22. Engage stakeholders in the development and revision of DTSC policies impacting communities through the use of Policy Dialogue and Negotiated Rulemaking

Observations: Several legislative initiatives are currently being considered to address issues associated with public involvement, permitting and hazardous waste clean-up processes, and few community stakeholders have direct access to these discussions and decisions. Concurrently, environmental justice coalitions, among other stakeholders, have proposed policy changes to address perceived deficiencies at DTSC. For example, the People's Senate August 2014 report proposes policies to reduce conflicts of interest at DTSC; improve transparency; reform the permitting process, enforcement, and clean-up practices; and improve emergency response. Stakeholders interviewed called on DTSC to address this gap in participation by creating opportunities for community (and other) stakeholders to participate in regulatory processes.

Negotiated Rulemaking has been used extensively at all levels of government during the past 20 plus years in an effort to develop more effective laws or regulations while reducing conflicts that often result in lawsuits and lengthy delays in implementing new laws. This approach involves all major stakeholders in a process that attempts to account for the legitimate concerns of each group. It provides a forum for stakeholders to better understand the views and needs of others, thereby leading to rulemaking that stands a better chance of meeting the various interests of stakeholders and of being effectively implemented.

Path to Implementation: DTSC could pursue using a Negotiated Rulemaking process to address many of the statutory/regulatory/policy potential actions in this report. By engaging the full range of stakeholders in such a process, the Department benefits from gaining a better understanding of how various stakeholders view the issues, which allows the Department to develop more comprehensive, integrated approaches to achieving its mission. To enhance the probability of success, DTSC and other State leaders involved with DTSC should agree to not only participate actively but to support outcomes on which broad support or consensus emerges.

23. Commit to a Facilitative Leadership model

Observations: To ensure that improved public involvement practices are sustainable, organizational changes must be accompanied by leadership that genuinely supports change. Supporting change

requires helping staff to embrace and not resist desired improvements. This requires strong – but collaborative – leadership. One-way change – from either the bottom or top – is typically less effective than two-way change, where both those in leadership positions and those in mid-management and staff work together to imagine and support change. This type of fully-engaged organizational change requires a leadership style that draws staff into the process. Therefore, this recommendation proposes a concentration and focus on adopting “Facilitative Leadership” as the predominant executive and management leadership style. It will not only support changes in organizational culture but also provide a framework for more effective interactions with a wide range of stakeholders. During the past year some DTSC supervisors and other staff members received training in Facilitative Leadership, and they widely suggested that upper level leadership and management also undertake similar training.

Path to Implementation: Conduct training for those at all levels of management and leadership positions on the principles and skills of Facilitative Leadership. Publicize the efforts to create a facilitative culture and invite key community leaders and stakeholders into key training opportunities.

24. Augment funding for independent technical assistance and testing

Observations: There is a provision in the law, but no secure funding, to support external technical assistance available for communities. In part due to low public confidence, but also to ensure adequate resources for an independent review, communities need access to technical assistance and independent testing through third-party contractors. When communities have had access to technical assistance and independent testing they have been able to more effectively engage in DTSC decision-making processes.

Path to Implementation: DTSC should advocate for ongoing funding annually, financed through a separate entity (if needed), so community groups can apply for and receive, as needed and appropriate, technical assistance and independent testing. Ensure widespread knowledge of and access to this fund by effectively communicating its existence and guidelines to stakeholders and supporting communities through the application process.

25. Establish a system of transparency and accountability similar to other State agencies

Observations: As noted previously, many stakeholders interviewed cited a low level of trust of DTSC; the Department’s lack of transparency; and a general impression that DTSC is not fulfilling its mission as effectively as it could. Interviewees acknowledged the Department has proposed many good ideas over the years, but has been relatively ineffective in implementing these ideas. Examples of the concerns shared by interviewees included: approving permits in the absence of current or adequate supporting data; not addressing cumulative impacts; or not adequately considering community-generated data or concerns. Moreover, several external stakeholders perceive DTSC decisions as pro-polluter – not pro-community – regardless of public input.

Given the mission and responsibilities of DTSC some of those interviewed suggested creating a Board similar to the State Water Resources Control Board and the Air Resources Board to provide an opportunity for greater public accountability and visibility. This system provides a public forum for interested stakeholders to have an opportunity to observe and participate in a transparent and well documented setting. A Board can also serve to support Department staff and management in decision-making, capacity building, funding needs, and related issues. It is acknowledged that Boards do not solve all the problems of trust and transparency, as they also can be subject to political and private agendas.

Another potential alternative is for the Director to establish a group such as a Public Review Panel of internal and external individuals to serve a similar function, providing a public venue for major decisions to be discussed. This would not require external (legislative) action.

Path to Implementation: Creation of a Board would require statutory action. If pursued, or an alternative approach such as a Public Review Panel, consideration should be given to the size and composition of the group, perhaps building around specific areas of expertise representing community, legal, scientific, business, and environmental justice perspectives.

26. Pursue additional funding from the Legislature, including funds earmarked for public participation

Observations: It is widely perceived that DTSC is underfunded, which results in negative impacts to public participation. Many believe it places impacted communities in greater jeopardy of carrying the burden of disproportionate impacts. Interviewees cited a range of specific impacts to communities as a result of “bare-bones budgets”, including:

- (1) Public participation practices limited to what is required by law, not what is needed in a community or for a specific case
- (2) Delays in adopting and implementing remediation plans, and in reviewing permits which have been expired for several years, during which time there is no opportunity for public engagement, while health and environmental concerns remain unaddressed
- (3) Inability to collect new data, thereby defaulting to a negative declaration (based on outdated data or a process with limited opportunities for public participation) or a statement of overriding consideration; among others.

While some additional funds have been provided in the current budget to add staff positions at DTSC, most interviewees believe more funding is needed for the Department to meet public expectations associated with its mission.

Path to Implementation:

- Pursue increased budget allocations from the Legislature based on the complexity and importance of DTSC’s mission.
- Seek community and other stakeholder support to help secure additional funding.
- Increase budget allocations internally to emphasize and adequately support needed public involvement activities, including funding for a Public Participation Supervisor in each DTSC region.
- Expand funding to the TSCA and HWCA accounts to reduce the pressure for DTSC to make choices about which community should be given priority over another for remediation funds.
- Coordinate with U.S. EPA’s program which provides funding associated with clean-up sites.

27. Revise the composition of Community Advisory Groups

Observations: A critique of the current system – from the perspective of many residents living close to DTSC sites – is that, while the Community Advisory Group (CAG) concept is valuable, it can be undermined when overloaded with representatives who are not from the community, or who are

industry employees. As such, local community residents receive less attention and some feel alienated from the process. Furthermore, more could be done to publicize the potential value of community engagement and encourage community participation if the process can be shown to provide meaningful input and therefore create an incentive for participation.

Path to Implementation: Since CAGs are included in regulation, implementing this action would require a regulatory change to refocus the composition of this group – to provide a forum through which DTSC can communicate with and obtain input directly from community residents on a regular basis; quotas for participation could be established to ensure the process is not co-opted by any one group or voice.

Other measures to consider include:

- Ensure that CAG members are truly representative of the local community and represent different viewpoints, professions, and expertise
- Maintain a list serve for CAG members to quickly access information and share data
- Maintain a web page presence for each CAG, with full public access ability of the members to suggest additions, changes and updates; make meeting notes and meeting announcements and critical materials and reports readily available
- Work with each CAG to develop a mission, charter and ground rules; this can be based on one generic template with slight refinements and nuances for unique circumstances
- Prepare agendas, meeting materials and speakers well in advance and have that information available on a special part of the web site devoted to CAG meetings
- Advertise the meetings widely, make them very open to the public, record them (perhaps video) and make the recorded versions available to other stakeholders
- Use facilitation services when necessary so the meetings are well organized and well run
- Hold meetings at convenient times and locations in the impacted communities
- Take the opportunity for mutual education; sharing with the CAG and stakeholders what DTSC does and how its legal requirements and processes work; and learning from CAG members how better to engage and serve the community.

IV. DATA SOURCES AND STUDY METHODS

The potential actions outlined in this report are based on a multi-faceted approach to collecting primary data. The sources of this information include: stakeholder interviews; observations of DTSC public events; review of relevant reports and policy documents; and an analysis of outreach practices employed by other agencies and organizations with similar missions both within and outside California.

Interviews targeted two broad groups with diverse viewpoints. One group included *internal* stakeholders: DTSC senior leadership, public participation staff, technical staff, advisors/consultants, and California EPA leadership. The second group included a broad range of *external* stakeholders, with particular focus on persons who live or work in impacted communities. These included: community residents, tribes, State and local environmental justice organizations and networks, non-profit organizations, as well as advisers to the State Legislature and private companies who interface with DTSC's permitting, enforcement, and clean-up programs. Thirteen Department and Agency staff and 24 external stakeholders were interviewed from July through August 2015. A complete list of persons interviewed and interview questions are included in Appendix A.

The people and organizations interviewed were initially based on a list provided by DTSC's Office of Communications. This list was augmented by additional stakeholder representatives identified during the course of the interviews to broaden the range of perspectives incorporated into the analysis. The UC Davis team reached out by phone and email to all persons on the list at least three times. Some stakeholders responded that they had already conveyed their input to DTSC through other means. Others agreed to be interviewed either via phone or in-person; interviews typically lasted between 30-60 minutes.

Additional interviews are anticipated during the review process leading to final recommendations. Likewise, a series of stakeholder focus groups are being planned to review the draft report. (Please contact the UC Davis report team if you are interested.)

The second component of the analysis involved observation of DTSC public meetings and events. This included observation of the August 27, 2015, Delano public meeting regarding PCE air contamination. It also included webcasts of DTSC quarterly public meetings, as well as recordings of community meetings posted on YouTube. The UC Davis team will be observing additional DTSC events during the course of finalizing the potential actions report.

Third, the UC Davis team reviewed relevant reports and policy documents provided by DTSC staff. These included documents produced by DTSC, including their 2001 Public Participation Manual, and 2-year Permitting Enhancement Work Plan; documents produced for DTSC, such as the CPS Consulting Report; and reports and letters written to DTSC and the Legislature to impact community engagement and related policies, including the People's Senate and California Environmental Justice Coalition, both of which have developed a list of potential actions for improving DTSC's public outreach and involvement practices. The UC Davis report team sought input from various stakeholders in identifying potential statutory, regulatory and policy revisions, which will augment an internal analysis being conducted by DTSC.

The final source of data for this report included exploring best practice research from other agencies – both within and outside California – to identify approaches to public outreach which might augment those currently used by DTSC. These data were collected initially through web searches and later

through interviews with individuals from the outside agencies. A compilation of these findings is embedded in the potential actions.

The UC Davis team reviewed and compiled all data completed from the sources described above. Based on the UC Davis team's experience in public engagement and environmental justice, we identified common themes most relevant to how DTSC's public participation policies and practices might be improved, especially impacted communities.

V. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

List of Persons Interviewed

The following individuals were interviewed during the first phase of the potential actions development process. In some instances, the persons interviewed also shared input from colleagues, who are not identified by name below. Additional interviews and focus groups will continue through mid-October, 2015, in order to review, edit, and add to the draft potential actions.

Internal stakeholders interviewed:

1. Ana Mascarenas, Assistant Director for Environmental Justice, DTSC
2. Carolyn Yee, Tribal Liaison, DTSC
3. Karen Baker, Project Manager, DTSC
4. Marcus Simpson, Staff Services Manager, DTSC
5. Marina Perez, Public Participation Specialist, DTSC
6. Nathan Schumacher, Public Participation Specialist, DTSC
7. Orchid Kwei, DTSC Staff Legal Counsel, DTSC
8. Peter Ruttan, Project Manager, DTSC
9. Terri Hardy, Special Assistant to the Director, DTSC
10. Tim Chauvel, Public Participation Specialist, DTSC
11. Wayne Lorentzen, Project Manager, DTSC
12. Arsenio Mataka, Assistant Secretary of Environmental Justice, California Environmental Protection Agency
13. Grant Cope, Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency

External stakeholders interviewed:

14. Bennett Jackson, Hualapai Department of Cultural Resources
15. Bill Magavern, Co-Chair, DTSC External Advisory Group; Coalition for Clean Air
16. Bob Fredenburg, Chief Consultant, Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee
17. Bradley Angel, Executive Director, Greenaction
18. Colin Bailey, Executive Director, The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
19. Dawn Hubbs, Hualapai Department of Cultural Resources
20. Denise Duffield, Associate Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility
21. Gladys Limon, Staff Attorney, Communities for a Better Environment
22. Ingrid Brostrom, Senior Attorney, Center for Race, Poverty & the Environment
23. Isabelle Miranda, Delano Community Member
24. Kathryn Phillips, Sierra Club
25. LaVonne Stone, Founder, Fort Ord Environmental Justice Network

26. Lupe Martinez, Assistant Executive Director Delano, Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment
27. Marian Moe, Community Resident, Curtis Park, Sacramento
28. Maricela Mares-Alatorre, California Environmental Justice Coalition, and Greenaction
29. Markus Niebanck, Chair, DTSC Brownfields Restoration Advisory Group; EnviroFinance Group, LLC & Affiliated Companies
30. Mary Sue Maurer, Councilmember, Calabasas City Council
31. Marylia Kelley, Executive Director, Tri-Valley Cares
32. Rachel Wagoner, Chief Consultant, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
33. Robina Suwol, Executive Director, California Safe Schools
34. Sean Tolnay, CJS Support Services
35. Sheila Tracy, Community Resident, Fort Bragg
36. Thomas McHenry, Co-Chair, DTSC External Advisory Group; Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
37. Valerie Gorospe, Community Organizer, Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment

List of Interview Questions

Questions asked during the interviews varied, depending on if the person was an internal or external stakeholder, their experience and background with DTSC initiatives, and their available time for the interview. The following questions include the variety of questions asked to interviewees:

The starting point for *internal* interviews of key DTSC leaders included:

- What do you believe works well for engaging the public across the complex set of issues for which DTSC is responsible?
- Of current policies, programs, and practices, what do you think does not serve DTSC well?
- Of current policies, programs, and practices, what do you think does not serve the public well?
- What are some of your initial ideas on how to address the shortcomings you have identified?
- What challenges do think might/will be faced in implementing your ideas?

The starting point for questions for key *external* stakeholders included:

- What is your experience working with DTSC on issues of community concern?
- How do you understand the challenges DTSC faces based on its mission, and the “limitations” on how it can respond to certain community concerns?
- What is your assessment of DTSC’s community engagement practices, specifically with situations in which you have been involved? Do you have specific feedback on DTSC’s public noticing requirement?
- What is your assessment of DTSC’s understanding of community perspectives and their capacity to address community concerns?
- Have you participated in a Community Advisory Group (CAG) (related to DTSC)? If so, what was your experience? How do you think that a CAG, or CAGs in general could be more effective?
- What potential actions would you offer to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of DTSC’s community involvement practices?

- Our UC Davis team will be organizing additional one-on-one and small group interviews as well as public forums. Do you have any suggestions of who else we should engage (including monolingual Spanish speakers), and/or where we should hold the forums to further develop these potential actions?
- Do you feel you are hearing about hazardous waste permitting or environmental clean-up actions at facilities in your area? If not, how and through what venues would you like DTSC to communicate about hazardous waste permitting or environmental clean-up actions in your area?
- Do you think that DTSC is listening to your comments about hazardous waste facilities or environmental clean-up actions in your area and taking them seriously?
- How would you like to receive information and feedback from DTSC regarding hazardous waste facilities or environmental clean-up actions?
- How familiar are you with the hazardous waste permitting process? Would you attend a workshop or training to gain a better understanding of the Permitting process?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- 2 Year Plan: Permitting Enhancement Work Plan. (2014, December 5). Retrieved June 25, 2015, from https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/InformationResources/upload/Permitting_Enhancement_Workplan.pdf
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- Fixing DTSC's Foundation April 2013 - April 2014. (2014, July 28). Retrieved June 25, 2015, from https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/upload/Fixing-Foundation_One-year-Rpt.pdf
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- Marxen, J. (2010, October 6). Public Participation Manual. Retrieved June 25, 2015, from <https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/LawsRegsPolicies/Policies/PPP/upload/DTSC-PublicParticipationManual.pdf>
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- People's Senate and the California Environmental Justice Coalition. July 6, 2015. Letter to Hon. Chair de Leon, Vice Chair Fuller, and Senators Cannella, Levya, and Mitchell. Re: Confirmation of Barbara Lee as Director of the DTSC.

Position Duty Statements. (n.d.). Department of Toxic Substances Control.

The People's Senate: Building a New Vision for DTSC. (2014, August 7). Retrieved June 25, 2015, from http://www.crpe-ej.org/crpe/images/stories/pdf/FINAL_PeoplesSenateReport.pdf

Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 66271.31 Pre-Application Public Meeting and Notice.

Tucker, L. (2013, December 9). Golden Wasteland: Regulating Toxics, or Toxic Regulation? Retrieved June 25, 2015, from <http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/sites/default/files/resources/goldenwasteland.pdf>

UC Davis Extension Collaboration Center. (2014, June) Summary of Selected Stakeholder Interviews: Regarding Public Participation Efforts at the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. Retrieved June 25, 2015.

APPENDIX C. TOOLS FOR ENHANCING ELECTRONIC MODERNIZATION

The following list of electronic tools for helping to engage the public has been compiled drawing on the work of Community Matters. A full understanding of their intended use is required before considering their application.

Giving input about places via a map

These mapping tools enable participants to leave comments on maps, for example suggesting bike share locations or identifying community assets. Typically set up by planners for use by community members.

- [Community Remarks](#) – map based civic engagement tool for collaborative problem solving.
- [Crowdmap](#) – if you want to make a web map to tell a story, this is a tool for that.
- [Shareabouts](#) – choose a template (e.g. street safety, participatory budgeting) and have your map up and running, ready to collect public input, in minutes.
- [TellUs Toolkit](#) – a cloud-based decision support system to help you engage stakeholders in a range of location based problems.
- [Tidepools](#) – re-skinnable custom apps, time-based maps, and data feeds. A collaborative, mobile mapping, and social hub.
- [Vivid Maps](#) – engage your community by providing a platform to map local assets, special places, or respond to place based surveys.

Responding to surveys and giving input in other ways

These tools provide a means for asking questions and receiving answers, and aim to reduce accessibility barriers which sometimes exist between planners/elected officials and residents.

- [All Our Ideas](#) – Wiki surveys + crowd-sourced data, backed by social data collection research.
- [Ask Them PPF](#) – a free & open-source website for questions and answers with public figures.
- [Cityzen](#) – facilitates social media and polling integration for your project.
- [Crowd Hall](#) - easily host interactive town halls with your audience.
- [Open Town Hall](#) – an online public comment platform for government.
- [Poll Everywhere](#) – ask your audiences questions and view the responses in real time.
- [Textizen](#) – send, receive, and analyze questions via text messages so you reach the people you serve, with the technology already in their pocket.

Choosing priorities and setting budgets

These tools let participants identify their priorities in a planning process, and explore the implications for budgets. Typically set up by planners for use by community members.

- [Budget Simulator](#) – public consultation tool specifically focused on gathering insight about budgets.
- [CrowdGauge](#) – a framework to gauge the values, priorities, and preferences of the crowd with a game.
- [Citizen Budget](#) – online tool to involve residents in decision-making processes.
- [Wejit](#) – creates a page for collaboration and community building for any topic.

Navigating the planning process together

These tools create a space for idea generation and meaningful discussion with community stakeholders. Use the feedback you collect to create potential actions which align with what the community wants.

- [Citizen Space](#) – organize and publish all your consultations easily.
- [Collabco](#) – collaborative wikis, open discussions, digital focus groups and more tools facilitate collaboration and communication with members of your community.
- [Community PlanIt](#) – play a game and simultaneously plan for your community in the process.
- [CoUrbanize](#) – a tool for developers to list projects and for residents to comment/leave feedback for said projects.
- [Crowdbrite](#) – a suite of tools for collaboration (e.g. online meetings), engagement (e.g. charrettes), and creation.
- [DialogueApp](#) – solve policy challenges with input from citizens.
- [EngagementHQ](#) – the complete community engagement toolkit.
- [EngagingPlans](#) – create websites for your planning projects, including a tool for discussions.
- [Granicus SpeakUp](#) – easy to use tools for citizen ideas and feedback.
- [MetroQuest](#) – educate the public about your project through a series of fun and visual screens (e.g. identifying and ranking priorities, rating scenarios/strategies, public comment).
- [MindMixer](#) – build better communities by involving people in the things they care about.
- [PlaceSpeak](#) – using geography, participants can find out about community consultations nearby and proponents can digitally connect and engage with people within specific boundaries.
- [Recovers](#) – Facilitates strategic, effective responses following local natural disasters.

- [Zilino](#) – host deliberative online forums and other types of well-designed, facilitated participatory processes.

Brainstorming ideas to reach decisions

These tools help groups identify and develop ideas, and move them towards decisions.

- [Codigital](#) – a scaleable, engaging way for large groups to generate and refine ideas.
- [e-deliberation](#) – convene multiple stakeholders to decide together on a common agenda for change.
- [Ethelo](#) – a dynamic, holistic framework for stakeholder engagement, conflict resolution, and collective determination.
- [Loomio](#) – free, open-source software for anyone, anywhere to participate in decisions that affect them.
- [Neighborland](#) – a project ideation platform utilizing open ended questions to catalyze public brainstorming.
- [Stickyworld](#) – a visual based forum platform.

Chatting on neighborhood social media

A Facebook-like discussion and updates tool, oftentimes private for neighbors to engage each other. Typically not specific to a planning project.

- [Civic Commons](#) – social media for stuff that matters. A place where people are sharing perspectives and working toward common solutions.
- [Front Porch Forum](#) – a private social forum for neighbors to connect.
- [i-Neighbors](#) – free community websites, email lists, and more.
- [NextDoor](#) – a private social network for your neighborhood.
- [Our Common Place](#) – use this platform to share and connect with others in your community.

Sharing neighborhood knowledge

Who knows a neighborhood better than the people living there? These engagement tools help people to share their what they know about the places they call home via idea generation, wikis, how-to guides, etc. Typically not set up by planners.

- [Community Almanac](#) – a crowd-source wiki for people to share stories, local knowledge.
- [Neighborhow](#) – create how-to guides related to your community.

ⁱ This potential action addresses the DTSC 2-Year Permitting Enhancement Work Plan, Goal 8, Action 2.

ⁱⁱ This potential action addresses the DTSC 2-Year Permitting Enhancement Work Plan, Goal 8, Action 2.

ⁱⁱⁱ This potential action addresses the DTSC 2-Year Permitting Enhancement Work Plan, Goal 7, Action 3.

^{iv} This potential action addresses the DTSC 2-Year Permitting Enhancement Work Plan, Goal 7, Action 4.