

DTSC Response to IRP Request
October 2016

- **How does the department assess the quality and effectiveness of its public outreach?**
 - For decades DTSC's Public Participation Program has used a number of performance metric and evaluation tools to assess the quality and effectiveness of public outreach across DTSC Programs.

The following assessment tools are used to evaluate public outreach effectiveness:

- **Project-Specific Surveys**

DTSC conducts project/site-specific community assessments at the project level to determine community's expectations and information needs. These assessments result in DTSC identifying key findings and best practices; process improvements and opportunities for providing translation and interpretation services; placing information in publications that address the different cultures within a community; and providing outreach at venues and times that fit the cultural makeup and language needs of the community.

Examples of the project specific assessments:

Santa Susana Field Laboratory - SSFL

In March 2016 DTSC conducted a Community Survey with the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) stakeholders to assess and evaluate if DTSC's public engagement practices are productive and meaningful.

The SSFL project is a long-term cleanup and permitting project with a variety of diverse stakeholders. Characterization of the site is mostly complete, and DTSC will need to better engage the community to help them transition into the next project phase. The next phase involves multiple formal public comment periods. DTSC has strived to remain engaged with stakeholders to ensure they feel free to make comments and provide feedback throughout the project.

Details gathered from the SSFL assessment provided DTSC with essential information for the planning and strategizing of community outreach activities, as it will determine critical decisions to accompany DTSC's plans to ensure future community engagement enhancements.

Kettleman:

In an effort to gather Kettleman City input regarding community concerns and to identify opportunities to enhance public engagement, in June 2012 DTSC conducted a community assessment process for the Kettleman Hills Facility and the community of Kettleman City. Public Participation members conducted a door-to-door survey as well as in-person interviews with Kettleman City community residents, stakeholders and community leaders.

The benefits of the findings from the surveys and interviews included:

- Provided DTSC Executive Staff with a summary of general Kettleman City concerns and views of DTSC and community involvement efforts
- Identified specific public participation activities that would facilitate community involvement
- Provided background for DTSC to serve as a catalyst to initiate a more comprehensive approach to addressing problems identified from the evaluation.
- Identified DTSC's opportunities as a convener, to assist in generating increased and continuing attention to community concerns, as well as providing faster responses to the needs identified by Kettleman City residents

Buttonwillow

In February 2013, the DTSC Public Participation program conducted an in-depth Community Assessment in Buttonwillow regarding community concerns and input regarding the Clean Harbors Landfill facility located outside of Buttonwillow. The Community Assessment augmented earlier community survey efforts through in-person community interviews with Buttonwillow residents, local officials, business persons and interested parties. Details gathered from the door-to-door assessment provided DTSC with critical decision-making information for the planning and execution of community outreach activities to accompany DTSC's Permitting decisions for the landfill facility, and to ensure key enhancements in the area of community engagement.

- **Post Meeting Surveys**

Evaluation surveys are conducted by DTSC at the conclusion of public meetings (i.e. workshops, open house forums, and public training sessions). Results are consolidated, reviewed by the project team members and used to identify key findings, best practices, opportunities for needed changes to future meeting formats, and information sharing.

- **Performance Metrics**

The quantity of public engagement activities conducted by the Public Participation Team is tracked by DTSC's EnviroStor system. Performance areas tracked include: public meetings held; Public Notices developed and mailed; community assessments conducted; community members and stakeholders contacted via mail and electronically; and social media public outreach metrics.

As a part of its modernization efforts to enhance public outreach and engagement, DTSC is exploring innovative methods to better track both the quantitative and qualitative effectiveness of our public communications outreach strategies. As these enhanced performance metrics tools are developed, the Department will report on its outreach performance.

Proposed performance enhancement efforts include:

- Create feedback channels and mechanisms to track and report public outreach performance
- Establish Automated Surveys to be used to analyze and gauge “How our public outreach and engagement strategies are performing...”
- The use of other automated tools and tabulation mechanisms to better monitor and track audience/public reach.

Additional Assessments Conducted:

- **CPS HR Consulting Review**

In late 2013, DTSC began an internal effort to identify the need to modernize and update its public participation efforts and assess its public engagements processes across DTC core programs. DTSC contracted with CPS HR Consulting, a non-profit corporation, to perform a review of the program and identify areas needing process improvements.

The review identified several key areas for improvement including:

- Enhancements to aged/outdated process workflows
- Review relevance of existing Polices
- Modifications to Guidance documents, specifically outlining best practices
- Need for DTSC to develop a process for earlier Public involvement in the technical processes within the permitting and cleanup programs

- **UC Davis Enhancing & Modernizing Public Outreach and Engagement Strategies**

DTSC used the CPS findings to establish overarching goals for its improvement effort. DTSC then contracted with UC Davis Center of Collaboration and Policy in April 2015 to build on its modernization initiative. UC Davis was tasked with organizing and conducting statewide conversations with stakeholders to solicit their recommendations for change. The recommendations will help DTSC develop additional strategies for enhancing outreach tools, program work flow processes, methods, and guidance documents.

- **Does DTSC believe the current CAG structure is working?**

- DTSC’s authority with respect to CAGs is to assist in the formation of the CAG and to participate in CAG meetings. DTSC believes the CAG structure has been successful at several sites within the State; however, it cannot provide a qualitative assessment as to whether it “works” at all DTSC sites.