



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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DTSC Certifies El Cerrito Mill and Lumber Site

Berkeley --- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced certification of the hazardous substances cleanup at the former El Cerrito Mill and Lumber Company located at 10812 San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito.

DTSC's certification means that all environmental cleanup activities required by the cleanup plan approved by DTSC in November 2003 are complete. The site is now suitable for unrestricted land use and development.

"We are pleased that the cleanup activities at this urban brownfield site are complete and this property can now be put back to productive use," said DTSC Chief Deputy Director B.B. Blevins.

The El Cerrito City Council has approved a redevelopment plan for the property that includes construction of more than 6,800 square feet of commercial retail space, 1,300 square feet of office space, 26 live-work dwellings, a 1,800 square foot recreation center, and 136 apartment units. Cleanup of soil and groundwater contamination was required as part of the City Council's project approval.

The El Cerrito Mill and Lumber site is one of many brownfield sites throughout California where DTSC has supervised the investigation and cleanup, and certified the property for reuse. Brownfield sites are agricultural, industrial, or abandoned properties that are contaminated or thought to be contaminated, and may be underutilized due to environmental cleanup costs or liability concerns.

El Cerrito Mill and Lumber Company milled and sold high-grade lumber from the late 1940s until it closed in 2001. The site is approximately 4.1 acres and has been vacant since 2001. Historic operations at the site contaminated the soil in a few areas with arsenic, lead, and petroleum hydrocarbons. Gasoline was detected in the groundwater at one area of the site where an underground tank was formerly located.

During environmental cleanup activities in 2004, approximately 610 cubic yards of contaminated soil were excavated and disposed offsite at an appropriately permitted facility. Excavated areas were then backfilled with clean soils to meet unrestricted land use standards. Contaminated groundwater was aerated until cleanup goals were achieved. The groundwater at the site is not a source of drinking water.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.