



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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For Immediate Release

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State Proposes to Deny Hazardous Waste Permits for Mercury Recovery Services, Inc. of Pomona and Monrovia

SACRAMENTO -- The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) will hold a public hearing March 18, 1998 to receive public comments regarding a proposed permit denial for two hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities owned by Mercury Recovery Services, Inc. in Los Angeles County.

The public hearing will be held:

7:00 p.m. - Wednesday, March 18, 1998
Covina High School
463 South Hollenbeck in Covina, California

The hearing is part of DTSC's permit review process which includes a public comment period. The public comment period extends from February 11 to March 30, 1998. DTSC is proposing to deny Mercury Recovery Services, Inc.'s permit applications because of repeated violations and noncompliance with the State's hazardous waste management control laws.

Mercury Recovery Services, Inc.'s Pomona facility (MRS-Pomona) is located at 813 Towne Center Drive. The company has applied for a Series A Standardized Permit to store and treat spent fluorescent light tubes and high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps at MRS-Pomona. Mercury Recovery Services, Inc.'s Monrovia facility (MRS-Monrovia) is located at 2021 South Myrtle Avenue. The company has applied for a Small Quantity Series C Standardized Permit to store and treat spent HID lamps at MRS-Monrovia.

DTSC's proposed denial is based on repeated violations at the facilities between 1995 and 1997. The violations include: illegal disposal of hazardous waste; disposal of hazardous waste at an unauthorized facility; accepting and handling unauthorized hazardous waste; treatment of hazardous waste using unauthorized equipment; and transportation of hazardous waste by unregistered transporters. On December 4, 1997, based on these violations, the California Attorney General's Office filed a complaint for civil penalties, injunctive relief, and recovery of investigative costs against Mercury Recovery Services, Inc. and its chief executive officer, Robert J. Roberts.

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MRS-Pomona is currently operating under a DTSC Consent Agreement issued on February 9, 1996. Under the agreement, MRS-Pomona has authorization to store and treat spent fluorescent light tubes until a final permit decision is made by DTSC. The MRS-Monrovia facility's authorization to operate expired on January 1, 1998. If the proposed permit denials are finalized, closure of the two facilities will begin immediately.

At the MRS-Pomona facility, spent fluorescent tubes are processed by mechanically crushing them to separate the broken glass and metal endcaps from the phosphor powder inside. The phosphor powder contains mercury and is managed as a hazardous waste. The broken glass and metal endcaps are analyzed to ensure they are not hazardous and are shipped to a recycler.

At the MRS-Monrovia facility, spent high-intensity discharge lamps were manually disassembled. The lamps have an inner capsule that contains mercury that is managed as a hazardous waste. If the outer leaded glass exceeds the toxicity characteristics for lead concentrations, it must be managed as hazardous waste. The nonhazardous metal stem mounts are shipped to a scrap metal recycler.

Public comments on the proposed permit denial can also be submitted in writing. Written comments should be addressed to:

Department of Toxic Substances Control
Hazardous Waste Management Program
Attention: Peggy Harris, P.E. Chief
P.O. Box 806
Sacramento, CA 95812-0806

Copies of the DTSC's administrative record and the "Statement of Basis/Intent to Deny a Standardized Permit to Operate Under California Hazardous Waste Control Laws" are available at the Pomona Public Library and the Monrovia Public Library reference desk.

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