

**Fact Sheet  
December  
2003**

# Pioneer Valley High School Santa Maria, California



**SEEKING YOUR COMMENTS ON THE PLAN TO CLEAN UP THE SCHOOL SITE**

*DTSC is one of six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. The Department's mission is to restore, protect and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.*

State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency



## INTRODUCTION

Santa Maria Joint Union High School District (SMJUHS) conducted environmental investigations at the new school under construction: Pioneer Valley High School located 800 feet north of E. Main Street and on N. Fremont Street in Santa Maria, California.

Low levels of pesticides were detected in the soil in one area at the site. Based on those results, SMJUHS prepared a Draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) proposing to remove approximately 5,000 cubic yards (280 truckloads) of soil from the site under the oversight of our state agency, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). **You are invited to review and comment on this Draft RAW.**

## IN THIS FACT SHEET, YOU WILL FIND

- What was found
- How it got there
- That it is not a risk to public health
- Cleanup options
- Why and how the site will be cleaned up
- How you can tell us what you think
- Who to contact for more information
- Information about the **30-day Public Comment Period** and the **Public Meeting**

SMJUHS is responsible for the site clean-up. DTSC ensures the cleanup work meets state and federal standards that protect the public's health and the environment.

## PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

December 10, 2003 – January 16, 2004

The purpose of the public comment period is to give you the opportunity to review and provide us with your comments and questions on the soil Draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) for the Pioneer Valley High School. We invite you to send your comments to:

Ms. Laura Zaremba  
DTSC Project Manager  
Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91201  
[Lzaremba@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:Lzaremba@dtsc.ca.gov)

## PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, January 7, 2004  
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

DTSC will host a community meeting to take your comments, answer your questions and provide information about the environmental investigation findings and the proposed soil clean-up at:

Ethel Pope Auditorium  
901 S. Broadway  
Santa Maria, California 93454

**Spanish translation  
will be provided**

**Kung kailangan nyo nang  
impormasyon sa tagalog,  
pakiusap po lamang kontakin si  
Ms. Maya Akula sa  
(818) 551-2917.**

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Under the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), DTSC has prepared a **draft Notice of Exemption (NOE)** for this project. The NOE states that the proposed cleanup will not have a significant negative effect on the environment because of the project's short duration, and the controlled manner in which the contaminated soil will be excavated, loaded onto trucks, and transported off-site for disposal.

## **SITE INVESTIGATIONS**

The SMJUHSD conducted a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (initial environmental investigation) and Supplemental Site Investigation at the 53.5-acre site under DTSC oversight. The focus of the investigation was to determine if there were any impacts from chemicals related to past agricultural practices at this location (such as pesticides, herbicides, paraquat, and metals).

During the extensive investigation, soil was tested across the property at the new high school campus. SMJUHSD submitted the report (Draft RAW) to DTSC in August 2003. The Draft RAW documents low levels of two pesticides: dieldrin and toxaphene (known as organochlorine pesticides) were detected in one area on the school's property (future tennis courts area). These levels of pesticides are above those allowed by DTSC for school sites.

As a result, a site cleanup (at the future tennis courts area) known as a removal action is being proposed to remove and eliminate any potential long-term health risks posed by the pesticides in the soil. Once the contaminated soil is removed, the potential risk will be reduced to levels that are safe for students and faculty. DTSC will oversee the removal action and will ensure that the removal is performed in a manner that does not result in any harm to people or the environment.

## **HOW THE CHEMICALS GOT THERE AND WHY A CLEANUP IS NEEDED**

The pesticides came from over 60 years of agricultural practices at the site before the school was built. From the 1950s until 1970, these pesticides were used on crops to kill insects. Right now, the affected soil is covered by 2 feet of clean fill material and the public is not exposed. But in the future, if the school district decides to expand or build in this area, the pesticide needs

to be removed to make sure students and faculty are not exposed to it.

## **NOT A RISK TO THE PUBLIC**

The contaminated soil is not an immediate risk to the people who work or who live nearby because the contamination is limited to one small area of the campus, and is covered with 2 feet of clean fill material. This means the potential exposure is minimal.

## **CLEANUP OPTIONS**

Several cleanup options were evaluated. Protection of human health and the environment was the most important factor considered. The following options were reviewed:

Option 1 – No Action

Option 2 – On-site Containment (Capping)

Option 3 – Excavation and Disposal  
(Preferred Option)

Any cleanup plan must protect public health and the environment, have a reasonable cost, and be shared with the community. The best plan recommended in the Draft RAW that meets these goals is Option 3, Excavation and Disposal. The preferred cleanup option was selected because it is permanent, effective, feasible, and has a reasonable cost.

## **HOW SMJUHSD PLANS TO CLEAN IT UP**

The proposed Removal Action Workplan is to remove the contaminated soil from the future tennis courts area by excavating to a depth between 2 feet and 4.5 feet and transporting the soil to a state-approved disposal facility. Approximately 5,000 cubic yards of material will be removed in about 280 truckloads. Once the soil is removed, clean soil will be used to fill the hole and cover the area.

SMJUHSD will conduct the soil removal work on weekdays between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The cleanup will take about 4 weeks (the work is tentatively scheduled for the month of February 2004). The removal action will include digging out the soil, transporting it, follow-up confirmation soil sampling and analysis, and site restoration.

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## **SAFETY AND DUST CONTROLS DURING CLEANUP**

If the cleanup plan is approved as written, some noise from the earth-moving equipment can be expected during the removal. An effort will be made to keep the noise to a minimum. No traffic delays are expected while the trucks are driving to and from the site. The trucks will generally exit on Fremont Street and travel east on Main Street to the landfill. SMJUHSD will take the following steps to ensure safety and minimize the impact of dust generated during the cleanup:

- The new high school site will be fenced and secured from the public.
- Caution tape and construction cones will be placed around the excavation and staging areas.
- All vehicles will maintain slow speeds while on the site.
- Work areas will be sprayed or misted with clean water to prevent dust.
- Water mist will be sprayed on soil loaded into the transport trucks.
- Trucks will be covered with a tarp as they leave the site to prevent soil from falling off.
- The air will be monitored on-site to ensure the amount of dust stays at a safe level.

## **YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE COMMENTS**

You have the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft RAW during the Public Comment Period, which begins on December 10, 2003, and ends on January 16, 2004. Please send your questions and thoughts about the proposed cleanup option to: Laura Zaremba, DTSC Project Manager, (818) 551-2183, 1011 N. Grandview Ave., Glendale, CA 91201. Comments must be postmarked no later than January 16, 2004. You may also submit your comments at the community meeting.

## **WHERE TO FIND SITE DOCUMENTS (TECHNICAL REPORTS)**

The proposed cleanup plan is described in detail in the *Draft Removal Action Workplan* for Pioneer Valley High School. All documents about this site are available for your review at the following locations:

### **Santa Maria Public Library**

420 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93454

Phone: (805) 925-0994

Hours: Monday–Thursday 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

Fridays, Saturdays 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

### **Santa Maria Joint High School District**

2560 Skyway Drive, Santa Maria, CA 93455

Contact: Diane Bennett or Reese Thompson

Phone: (805) 922-4573 ext. 4401 or 4701

Hours: Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

### **Department of Toxic Substances Control Regional Records Office**

1011 N. Grandview Avenue

Glendale, CA 91201

Contact: Jone Barrio Phone: (818) 551-2886

Hours: Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

## **WHO TO CALL FOR INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about the cleanup project or activities, please call the following persons at our agency: Ms. Maya Akula, Public Participation Specialist, at (818) 551-2917; or Ms. Laura Zaremba, DTSC Project Manager, at (818) 551-2183. Si desea información en español, comuníquese con: Sr. Eloy Florez, Especialista en Participación Pública del DTSC, al (818) 551-2875. For media inquiries, please contact Ms. Jeanne Garcia, Public Information Officer, at (818) 551-2176. For more information about the DTSC, please visit our website at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov).

If you have any questions about the cleanup work schedule or on-site cleanup activities, please call Mr. Reese Thompson, SMJUHSD Director of Facilities and Operations, at (805) 922-4573 ext. 4701.

# NOTICE TO HEARING IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

TDD users can use the California Relay Service at (1-888-877-5378) to reach DTSC Public Participation Specialist, Maya Akula, at (818) 551-2917.

# MEETING ACCESSIBILITY

For information on meeting accessibility or to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Ms. Maya Akula at (818) 551-2917.

## PIONEER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL SITE PLAN

