

**Fact Sheet #2**  
**January 2002**

# **TOW BASIN SITE**

## **SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**



**PUBLIC INPUT SOUGHT ON DRAFT REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN AND DRAFT NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

*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**

You are invited to review and comment on a proposal for cleaning up environmental contamination at the former Tow Basin site at 3380 North Harbor Drive in San Diego, California. The proposal, called a Draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP), is to remove paint containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the Tow Basin and surrounding building, and possibly remove the structures themselves, if necessary. The cleanup would be performed under the direct oversight of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

Also offered for review and comment is the Draft Negative Declaration, a report documenting DTSC's proposed finding that the actions taken to clean up the contamination (removing the paint and possibly the structures) would not harm the environment or public health.

DTSC is overseeing the site investigation, and is working with the San Diego Unified Port District (Port District), Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company (Lockheed), and General Dynamics Corporation (General Dynamics) to clean up the site. This fact sheet provides information on site history, past site investigations, summaries of the Remedial Investigation (RI), Feasibility Study (FS), Health Risk Assess-

### **OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina  
Coronado Ballroom  
1590 Harbor Island Drive, West Tower  
San Diego, California 92101  
(Self-parking at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina  
will be validated)  
February 7, 2002  
Open House - 5:30PM to 6:30PM  
Public Meeting - 6:30PM

DTSC invites you to attend an open house and public meeting to receive more information about the Draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Draft Negative Declaration for the Tow Basin Site, and to receive public comments.

You may submit written public comments on the Draft RAP and Draft Negative Declaration any time during the 30-day public comment period beginning January 24, 2002, and ending February 25, 2002. All written public comments must be postmarked or emailed by February 25, 2002 and sent to:

Stacey Lear  
Public Participation Specialist  
Department of Toxic Substances Control  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, California 90630  
(714) 484-5354  
slear@dtsc.ca.gov

DTSC encourages you to take an active interest in the issues concerning the cleanup of the former Tow Basin site. Additional information is available at the local Information Repositories or from the project contacts (see page 5).

For information on accessibility or to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Stacey Lear by February 1, 2002.

For more information about DTSC, visit our website at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov).

*The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our website at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov).*

ment (HRA), and a summary of the proposed Draft RAP. DTSC is the lead agency overseeing the cleanup. (A glossary of terms used in this fact sheet can be found on page 4.)

There are two operable units (OUs) for the Site: the Soils Operable Unit and the Groundwater/Bay Operable Unit. The Draft RAP and Draft Negative Declaration for the Soils Operable Unit are available for public review and comment during a 30-day public comment period beginning January 24, 2002 and ending February 25, 2002. An open house and public meeting will also be held on February 7, 2002. The Groundwater/Bay Operable Unit will be addressed in a future investigation and proposed cleanup, which will also be available to the public in the future.



Figure 1 Site Location Map

## SITE HISTORY

Prior to 1941, the area was formerly underneath the San Diego Bay. The site was built on land created by filling in a portion of the San Diego Bay for land expansion. In 1954, the City of San Diego leased the land to General Dynamics. During that time, Convair, a division of General Dynamics, constructed a 300-foot long, 12-foot wide, and 6 foot deep concrete tank known as the Tow Basin, and subsequently enclosed the tank with a 13,000 square foot building that was constructed around the tank. The Tow Basin was used to test and develop hull designs for deep submersible vehicles and seaplanes.

The Port District was created in 1962 and assumed the lease from General Dynamics who continued to lease the land until 1969. From 1970 to 1991, Lockheed used the

Tow Basin to conduct hydrodynamic testing of various aerospace equipment, except for a three year period, when ROHR Marine, Inc., a subleasee, operated at the site. In 1991, the site reverted back to the Port District and operations ceased.

## PAST SITE INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations have been conducted at the site from 1991 through 1998. Prior to 1996, investigations were not overseen by DTSC. Lockheed conducted their own environmental investigations of contamination. The investigations indicated the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in sediment in drains inside the Tow Basin tank structure and storm drain catchbasins outside the building.

In 1991, interim cleanup took place under the control of the Port District. The interim cleanup consisted of removal of sediment and cleaning of catchbasins. The interim cleanup was performed prior to DTSC oversight.

## REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION

A Remedial Investigation (RI) was conducted in 1999 under the oversight of DTSC to further determine the nature and extent of contamination. The RI revealed the presence of PCBs in the paint coating the Tow Basin and building surfaces. The RI theorized that paint was originally formulated with PCBs to provide qualities of water and chemical resistance. The highest reported concentrations of PCBs were from paint on the Tow Basin tank structure. Gradual deterioration of paint is the likely source of PCBs in drains, storm drain catchbasins and unpainted surfaces at the site.

## FEASIBILITY STUDY

A Feasibility Study (FS) was prepared in 2000 to identify and evaluate cleanup alternatives for the site. Each cleanup alternative for the site was assessed against nine evaluation criteria developed by federal regulations. These criteria include protection of human health and the environment, feasibility, effectiveness, costs and community acceptance. These evaluation criteria provide the framework for conducting a detailed analysis for selecting an appropriate cleanup action for the site.

Utilizing the nine evaluation criteria, DTSC reviewed

and analyzed the following six cleanup alternatives:

Alternative 1 - Structure Removal and Off-site Disposal/Treatment;

Alternative 2a - Paint Removal by Chemical Solution and Off-site Disposal/Treatment;

Alternative 2b - Paint Removal by Hydroblasting and Off-site Disposal/Treatment;

Alternative 2c - Paint Removal by Sandblasting and Off-site Disposal/Treatment;

Alternative 3 - Encapsulation;

Alternative 4 - On-site Land Disposal in a Waste Management Unit;

Alternative 5 - No Action; and

Alternative 6 - A combination of Alternative 1 (Structure Removal and Off-site Disposal Treatment); and Alternative 2b; (Paint Removal by Hydroblasting and Off-site Disposal/Treatment).

## RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 6 is the preferred cleanup alternative and involves the removal of PCB containing paint by blasting with ultra-high pressure, low volume jets of water. The PCB containing paint would be removed, collected and transported to a pre-approved waste disposal/treatment facility permitted to receive this type of waste. If residual PCB concentration levels on concrete exceed 1 part per million (ppm), the structure demolition will be part of the cleanup. If not, the structure demolition will be conducted at a later date by the Port District under DTSC oversight. Conventional demolition equipment will be utilized in a controlled manner to minimize dust emissions. Debris would also be taken to a licensed disposal facility.

DTSC recommends Alternative 6 for the cleanup of the site because this alternative best meets the nine evaluation criteria for an appropriate cleanup remedy for the site. Specific details of the analysis can be found in the Feasibility Study. The Feasibility Study can be reviewed at the Information Repositories (see page 5).

## HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT

A Health Risk Assessment (HRA) was conducted to identify the potential human health risks posed by the site in its present condition, during cleanup, and after cleanup and building demolition. Human contact at the site is limited because it is completely fenced and is locked by gates. This removal will eliminate, the most significant human health risks (ingestion and inhalation).

- PCBs in Paint

The PCBs are in the paint that is covering the building and interior structures. An ingestion or inhalation exposure pathway is considered negligible because the PCBs are trapped in the paint and are not airborne. The trapped paint is covering the building, therefore eliminating the possibility of human ingestion or inhalation of PCBs. Skin contact with the paint is considered a health hazard for personnel working within the Tow Basin building. A Health and Safety Plan will be developed that provides measures to protect on-site workers and the nearby community during cleanup activities. Since the site is fenced and locked, there is no risk of contact to nearby residents. The cleanup goal for PCB contaminated painted surfaces is 1 part per million (ppm). This Health and Safety Plan will be available for public review at the local Information Repositories after the final RAP has been approved.

- PCBs in Soil

The Remedial Investigation data indicates that PCBs, where found in soil, are not present at levels above the health-based cleanup standard of 0.22 ppm.

Overall, the HRA concludes that the contamination at the site does not pose any significant public risk to those who live or work near the site. The HRA can be reviewed at the Information Repositories (see page 5). An analysis of health risk and cleanup options regarding the Groundwater/Bay Operable Unit at the site will be addressed in a separate, future evaluation.

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## DRAFT REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN

The Draft RAP contains a brief summary of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) findings and presents the keys components of the conceptual plan for the site cleanup options. Also, it clearly indicates specific cleanup action objectives, including cleanup levels and timeframes for completion of the cleanup actions. The Draft RAP recommends Alternative 6 for the proposed cleanup of this site.

## CEQA

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is an environmental impact review of proposed government actions. Under CEQA, an Initial Study was prepared by DTSC and concluded that the proposed cleanup would not cause negative environmental effects. The proposed Draft Negative Declaration formally documents the conclusion researched and evaluated in the Initial Study. The Initial Study and the Draft Negative Declaration are also available for public comment from January 24, 2002 to February 25, 2002.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This fact sheet is part of the DTSC public participation program for community members. The purpose of this program is to provide information to all interested parties, encourage public involvement, and provide for two-way dialog in the cleanup of this site. Additional information may be obtained by reviewing documents located at the Information Repositories or by contacting DTSC (see page 5).

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** - A law mandating environmental impact review of proposed state and local government actions.

**California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)** - A department within the California Environmental Protection Agency charged with regulation of hazardous waste from generation to final disposal and for overseeing investigation and cleanup of hazardous waste sites.

**Exposure Pathway** - Existing or hypothetical route by

which chemicals in soil, groundwater or other media can come in to contact with humans, animals or plants.

**Groundwater** - Water beneath the earth's surface that flows through soil and rock openings.

**Health Risk Assessment (HRA)** - A document that describes the possible and increased possibility of adverse health effects which may result from exposure to contaminants.

**Health and Safety Plan** - A plan used to describe controls and procedures to implement safety measures that will minimize any incidents, injuries and health risks associated with the field work activities conducted at the site.

**Negative Declaration (ND)** - A CEQA document issued by the lead regulatory agency, when the initial environmental study reveals that the proposed project will not have a significant negative effect on the environment.

**Operable Units (OUs)** - A separation of a site into manageable (smaller) units to facilitate cleanup.

**Parts Per Million (ppm)** - A unit of measure to describe levels or concentrations of contamination.

**Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)** - A group of man-made chemical compounds. Because of their insulating and non-flammable properties, PCBs have been widely used as coolants and lubricants in transformers, capacitors, and other electrical equipment. PCBs do not break down easily and accumulate in the environment. They are considered probable human carcinogens. PCB manufacturing was banned in 1977.

**Remedial Action Plan (RAP)** - A document approved by DTSC that outlines a specific plan leading to the cleanup of a contaminated site.

**Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)** - A study to identify the type, size and extent of contamination in the environment (Remedial Investigation) and provide an evaluation of alternatives for cleanup of any identified soil or groundwater contamination (Feasibility Study).

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like additional information about the Tow Basin Site, please call the contacts listed below:

### DTSC PROJECT CONTACTS:

Gloria Conti Project Manager DTSC 5796 Corporate Avenue Cypress, CA 90630 Phone: (714) 484-5469 Email: <a href="mailto:gconti@dtsc.ca.gov">gconti@dtsc.ca.gov</a>	Stacey Lear Public Participation Specialist DTSC 5796 Corporate Avenue Cypress, CA 90630 Phone: (714) 484-5354 Email: <a href="mailto:slear@dtsc.ca.gov">slear@dtsc.ca.gov</a>
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### DTSC MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeanne Garcia  
Public Information Officer  
DTSC  
1011 North Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, California 91201  
Phone: (818) 551-2176  
Email: [jgarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:jgarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov)

Notice to Hearing Impaired: You can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 (TDD). Ask them to contact Gloria Conti, Project Manager at (714) 484-5469.

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## INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

**Point Loma Library**  
2130 Poinsettia Drive  
San Diego, California 92107

### Hours of Operation

Monday and Wednesday - 12:00pm - 8:00pm  
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and  
Saturday - 9:30 am - 5:30 pm  
Sunday - 1:00 pm - 5:00pm  
(619) 531-1539

**Department of Toxic Substances Control**  
Julie Johnson  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, California 90630

### Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
(714) 484-5337  
Please call for an appointment

Information can also be reviewed at the  
**Environmental Services Library of the:**  
**San Diego Unified Port District**  
3165 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92101

### Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - Noon; 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
(619) 686-6200

## ANUNCIO

Si usted prefiere hablar con alguien en español acerca de esta información, o si le gustaría recibir una copia de esta información en español, favor de llamar a Gloria Conti. Su número de teléfono es (714) 484-5469.

**MAILING LIST COUPON**

If you have any comments concerning the Tow Basin Site or would like to be placed on the mailing list, please fill out the information below and mail it to Stacey Lear, Public Participation Specialist, DTSC, 5796 Corporate Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**MAILING LISTS ARE A PUBLIC RECORD**

DTSC mailings are solely for the purpose of keeping persons informed of DTSC activities. Mailing lists are not routinely released to outside parties. However, they are considered public records, and if requested, may be subject to release.



Ms. Stacey Lear  
Public Participation Specialist  
Department of Toxic Substances Control  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, CA 90630