



DTSC receives U.S. EPA grants to assess environmentally impacted communities in Southern California

One of the Department of Toxic Substances Control's senior environmental scientists has secured \$400,000 in federal grant funding to assess and clean up some of the most environmentally impacted communities in Southern California.

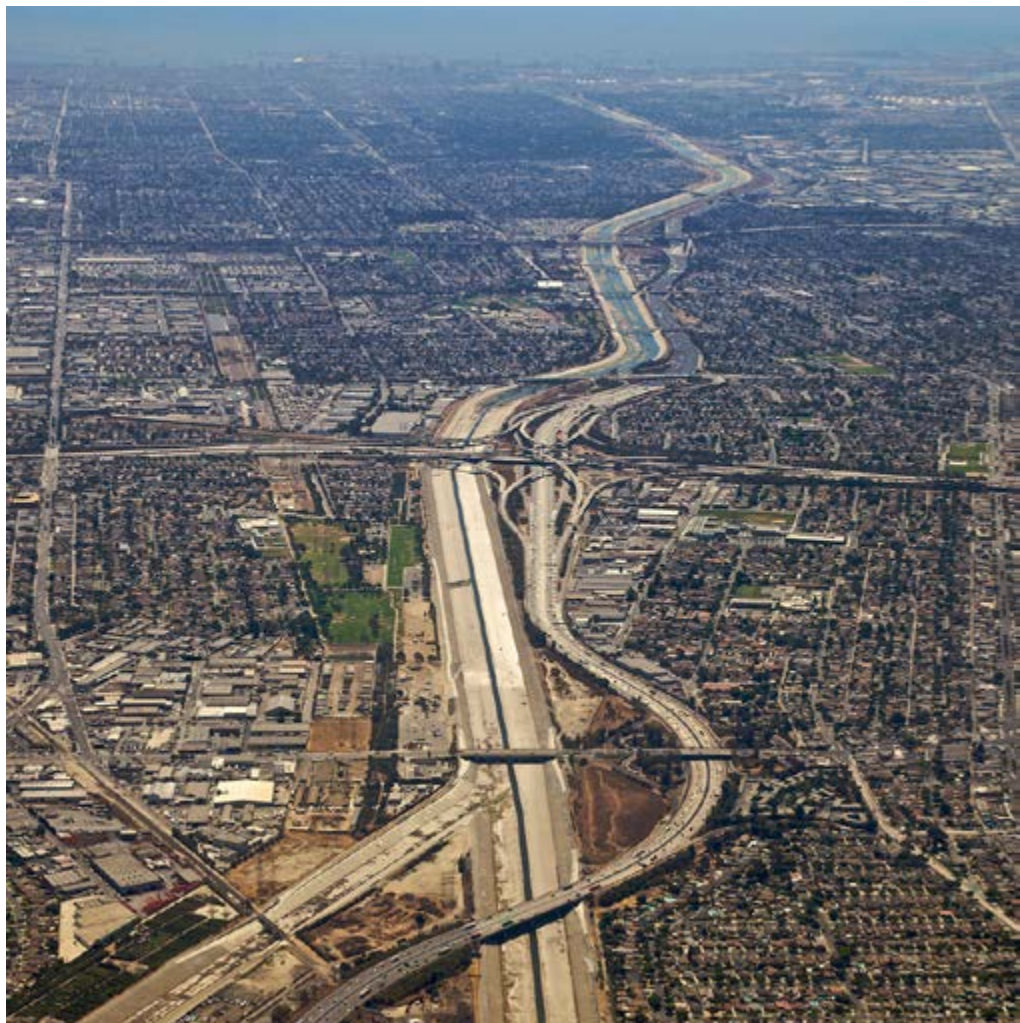
Maryam Tasnif-Abbasi applied for a community-wide assessment grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in December 2014 in hopes of addressing environmental justice issues affecting the underserved communities along the Interstate 710 corridor in Los Angeles County.

DTSC received two grants totaling \$400,000 to assess sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances and petroleum. The work will focus on the I-710 corridor, a 23-mile freeway that connects the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles and is home to one of the state's largest concentrations of refineries and rail yards. The grant application was an extension of an ongoing collaboration between DTSC, US EPA and the State Water Resources Control Board to address environmental concerns within the I-710 corridor.

"This grant is a great way to improve the environmental and public health conditions for residents along this corridor," Tasnif-Abbasi said.

She collaborated with the cities of Carson, Compton and Pico Rivera and the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation to prepare the grant appli-

In this view looking south, Interstate 710 snakes through Los Angeles towards Long Beach.





EPA Grants

ation. The idea of applying for a grant to address the communities' environmental assessment needs was born out of the concept that in order for DTSC to support effective, meaningful and long-term improvements, a deeper involvement was required, said Tasnif-Abbasi.

Applying for an EPA assessment grant for the cities along the corridor demonstrates DTSC's commitment to environmental justice, Tasnif-Abbasi said.

"DTSC has a strong commitment to environmental justice. Unfortunately, funding issues sometimes limit our ability to provide assistance," she said. "There is so much that we can do, that is why this grant is so important."

The grant gives DTSC flexibility to use the funding for developing a brownfields inventory, prioritizing assessments based on community needs and redevelopment potential, implementing the assessments as well as developing cleanup plans, if needed.

Tasnif-Abbasi reached out to the cities of Carson, Compton and Pico Rivera and the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation to obtain detailed information on the community needs and the negative impacts that underutilized land has on communities in their area. The grant allows for multiple assessments within the corridor.

DTSC will evaluate more than 30 sites in the communities of Willowbrook, Compton, Pico Rivera and Carson to determine what is necessary for cleanup and reuse.

About 1 million people, 90 percent of whom are minority and low-income, are impacted by industrial activities and the movement of goods through the I-710 corridor, according to the U.S. EPA.

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Pico Rivera Friends of the Library and the Environmental Commission of the City of Carson will work with DTSC to provide communication and outreach support. DTSC has established internship programs with the UC Irvine School of Social Ecology and the Earth Systems Sciences Department for students to support implementation of the grants.

The grants are part of \$54.3 million awarded nationally by U.S. EPA to 147 recipients to assess and clean up historically contaminated properties, known as brownfields, for reuse and development.