The Kettleman Hills Facility, Waste Management Incorporated, **Kettleman City California**

Kettleman City Community Assessment Summary

Introduction

In an effort to gather Kettleman City input regarding community concerns and to identify opportunities to enhance public engagement, DTSC has begun a new formal community assessment process for the Kettleman Hills Facility and the community of Kettleman City. Working from a foundation of genuine inquiry, in June 2012, DTSC's Office of External Affairs, Public Participation team distributed a community survey and conducted community interviews with Kettleman City community residents, stakeholders and community leaders.

This document has been prepared to summarize the findings from the surveys and interviews conducted by DTSC staff. DTSC has identified three primary purposes for this document. The first purpose is to provide DTSC Executive Staff with a summary of both general Kettleman City concerns and their views of DTSC and our community involvement work.

The second purpose is to assist with updating the 1994 Public Participation Plan for the Kettleman Hills Chemical Waste Facility. DTSC has not conducted a formal community assessment of the Kettleman Hills Facility as well as Kettleman City and surrounding area since 1994.

As written in DTSC's Public Participation Policy and Procedures Manual (February 2001), the purposes of the Plan update are to:

- Document local community interest, views and concerns; and
- Identify specific public participation activities that will facilitate community involvement in DTSC's decision-making process for the site.

The third purpose of this document is to provide background for our effort to serve as a catalyst for a more comprehensive approach to addressing problems identified through these interviews. Even if a community has little political influence (70 or so registered voters as

identified by one of the interviewees) and little economic influence (as shown by latest income and unemployment figures on table 2 on page 6), government has a social responsibility to identify and address serious problems detrimental to the quality of the community's life and therefore demanding of our attention. DTSC does not have a role in providing basic services for Kettleman City. However, as a convener, DTSC can assist in generating increased and continuing attention to community concerns, as well as providing faster responses to the needs as identified by Kettleman City residents.

1.1 Site Location, Surrounding Land Uses, and Project Description

The Waste Management Kettleman Hills Facility treats, stores and disposes of hazardous waste on 1,600 acres located approximately halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The facility operates in a rugged, rural area of Kings County, 2.6 miles from the intersection of State Highway 41 and Interstate 5.

Presently, 474 acres of the facility are available and permitted for hazardous waste. The Kettleman Hills Facility, which has operated for over 30 years, also accepts municipal waste in a separate operation at the site. The facility accepts solid, semi-solid and liquid hazardous and extremely hazardous wastes. DTSC does not allow the facility to accept Class A explosives, radioactive materials, biological agents, or infectious wastes. Kettleman Hills is one of three operating hazardous waste disposal facilities in California and the only one that accepts polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) waste for disposal.

The facility is regulated and inspected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), DTSC, California Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Kings County Department of Public Health, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District and the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. DTSC is now considering whether to expand the size of one of the landfill disposal units at the facility. The facility is 3.5 miles from the community of Kettleman City and 6.5 miles from the City of Avenal.

1.2 Facility Description

This commercial hazardous treatment, storage and disposal facility run by Waste Management is located off of State Highway 41 at 35251 Old Skyline Road.

At this facility, DTSC has permitted nine units that treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste. Among them is a drum storage unit that allows storage of hazardous waste in containers. Included in the permit but also regulated by USEPA is the PCB Flushing and Storage Unit. Workers at this unit transfer liquid PCB waste from bulk containers to a 10,000 gallon storage tank or to Department of Transportation approved metal drums for eventual off-site treatment or disposal. At the facility, there are two permitted bulk storage units. These units provide temporary storage of stabilized and destabilized waste before land disposal, treatment or shipment off-site.

Also present is a permitted final stabilization unit. This unit processes various solid, semi-solid and selected liquid wastes not suitable for direct shipment to a landfill unit or for treatment by solar evaporation or by some other method used at this facility. The process consists of mixing cement or another stabilizing agent. Additional units are the three solar evaporation units or surface impoundments. Lastly is landfill unit, B-18, allows for final land disposal.

The facility has a number of other permits in order to conduct business. These include:

1. Conditional Use Permits (No. 05-10) from the Kings County Community Development Agency (formerly known as Kings County Planning Agency).

2. Nonhazardous, Nonputrescible, Industrial Solid Waste Registration Permit from the County of Kings Department of Public Health.

3. Title V Permit (Authority to Construct / Permit to Operate) from the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District.

4. Biological Opinion from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as a result of a Section 7 Consultation request from U.S. EPA.

5. Consistency Determination (concurring with USFWS) or a new Fish and Game Code Section 2081 permit from the California Department of Fish and Game.

6. Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

7. Toxic Substances Control Act Permit (Coordinated Approval) from the USEPA Region 9.

1.3 Proximity of Other DTSC or USEPA Projects

DTSC and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) oversee investigations and cleanup activities near the Kettleman Hills Facility. Table 1 shows the distance of other sites within a twenty-mile radius of the facility.

Table 1 – Investigation/Cleanup sites within twenty miles of the facility

Site Name and Responsible Agency	Site Type	Lead Agency	Status	Address	Miles from Facility
Beacon Oil	State Response	CRWQCB	Closed	1.5 miles Southwest of Kettleman City	4
Chevron Pipeline Leak	Cleanup Program Site	CRWQCB	Closed	30th and Quail Avenue, Kettleman City	18

1.4 Community of Kettleman City

Kettleman City, located in California's San Joaquin Valley, lies 28 miles southwest of Hanford and 54 miles southwest of Fresno. In the nearby Kettleman Hills, oil was discovered in 1928. In 1929, a developer named A. Manford Brown founded the town. Kings County named State Highway 41 in Kettleman City as Brown Street in his honor.

Kettleman City is an unincorporated community with a population of 1,439. According to the U.S. Census Department's data for 2010, the racial makeup of the community was 96.1 percent

Latino and 2.9 percent identifying as White, and all other groups such as African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, and those identifying themselves as being of two races making up the remainder. The median age is 25.5 years old and the median income is $25,988. About 34 percent of adults over the age of 25 hold a high school diploma and about 4 percent hold a bachelor's degree.

Table 2 summarizes demographic data derived from the U.S. Census Department's Population, Housing, Social and Economic estimates for 2010, supplemented with economic data from the California Employment Development Department.

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Table 2 – Kettleman City Population Details[1]

Category	Count	Percent
Total Population	1,439	100%
Male	737	51.2
Female	702	48.8
Population under 20 years of age	416	28.9
Median Age	25.5	-
Household Size	4.11	-
White	478	33.2
African-American	4	0.3
Asian	1	0.1
Native American	8	0.6
Some Other Race/2 or More Races	61	4.2
Hispanic	1,383	96.1
Median Household Income	$25,988	-
Median Home Value	$105,730	-
Unemployment Rate (May 2012)	300	26.2
Less than 9th grade education (age 25 or higher)	315	50.2
High School Graduate or Higher (age 25 or higher)	211	33.7
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (age 25 or higher)	23	3.7

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1.5 Local Government

Kettleman City, an unincorporated community since its establishment in 1920s, is under Kings County and Richard Valle represents the community as its County Supervisor. Valle is one of five Supervisors elected from different Districts of Kings County to four-year staggered terms.

[1] American Community Survey, 2006-2010 (U.S. Census Bureau), Labor Force Data for Sub-County Areas, (California EDD), 2012.

The County Administrative Officer functions as the manager of Kings County, managing about 1300 full-time, part-time, and temporary workers. The final 2011/2012 budget projects revenues of $187 million, deriving mainly from sales taxes, property taxes, as well as federal and state fund transfers.

1.6 Community Survey

In June 2012, DTSC prepared and distributed 664 community surveys to Kettleman City residents and businesses to receive feedback about community interest and concerns regarding the facility.

1.7 Community Interviews

On June 14 and June 15 as well as June 21, 2012, four teams of two interviewers each (one English speaking and one Spanish speaking) met with representatives of Kings County, the Kettleman City Community Services District, other service agencies, business people, and area residents to gather information for this plan. The general plan allowed for the interviews of opinion leaders and elected officials during the day and additionally to interview residents between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. when they returned from work. Many of the resident interviews were not prearranged but rather came from walking door-to-door and speaking face-to-face with residents. Generally residents were quite open and interested in talking with DTSC staff.

DTSC spoke with 47 people of which 29 were Kettleman City residents. The information gathered from the surveys and interviews forms the basis of the summary of community concerns and issues that influence our future recommendations for public involvement and outreach activities.

1.8 Interview Responses

Representatives of Kings County government, Kettleman City residents, and local business people characterized themselves as having a high level of interest in Waste Management and

its business. Most people did not show a strong concern that the landfill and its operations were hurting their community. Interviews showed that residents want to know about the landfill. Most residents said that receiving information through U.S. mail was a good method of communication but some residents asked if future fact sheets could be simplified (less technical) as a means to improve communication. Nearly all interviewees offered information about a wide variety of community needs and concerns. Presented below is a brief summary the key issues and concerns ranked in order of importance as raised by community members during the interviews:

Drinking Water: All interviewees expressed deep concerns about the taste, quality, and quantity of drinking water provided by the Kettleman City Community Services District (the District). Sampling indicates slightly elevated levels of arsenic and benzene in the drinking water. However, more importantly, residents reported cloudy, brownish water as well as rotten egg smells and poor taste. As DTSC interviewed residents, many interviewers saw copies of the announcement from the District posted on doors of all local residences. This notice asked residents to conserve water because one of the two wells used by the District was not producing water as the well was undergoing needed maintenance.

Kings County planning staff and Kings County Supervisors were not reluctant to inform DTSC about the District's building moratorium. The District's limited water supply imposes a strict moratorium on any new hook ups within the District. Poor water supply has limited community growth, limits services, and limits new employment opportunities. Several large development proposals are in limbo because of this ongoing moratorium. These limits have a strong chilling effect on the economic and social life of the community.

Access to services and health care: Almost all interviewees expressed a general malaise about the lack of services in the community. A number of interviews had anecdotes about trips to Hanford (round trip is 77 miles) to purchase groceries or to fill drug prescriptions. Multiple interviewees mentioned that this problem affected them on a daily basis. With the exception

of governmental officials, no one connected the lack of services and health care in Kettleman City with the ban on new buildings (water quantity is the limiting factor) in Kettleman City.

Birth Defects and cancer rates: Six people expressed concerns regarding the number of birth defects and the amount of cancer in the community. There are lingering doubts and a lack of understanding of how the California Department of Public Health did their analysis of the birth defects found in the community. One person expressed doubt that the landfill's chemicals were not impacting residents. Several residents felt that there was no connection between the landfill and the community's health problems.

Quality of High School education/ youth crime: Interviewers noted that at least four residents reported that they had concerns about the lack of activities for young people after school. Several also mentioned that Avenal High School did not provide the kind of educational experience that they felt was best for their children. Crime activity was a concern of these residents as well. Thus residents expressed their interest in identifying after school activities to engage the youth.

Pesticide drift and over spraying: Four people brought forth their concerns about pesticide over drift and over spraying especially on the north and northwest sides of the community. These interviewees felt that this problem to date has not been addressed.

Facility Impacts: Three people expressed ongoing and strong concern that the landfill run by Waste Management was destroying residents' health and was an ongoing threat to the viability of the community. Two of three said that the facility needed to be closed.

Petroleum and the practice of fracking: Three people raised concerns about the effect of petroleum exploration on the community. In the hills around Kettleman City, new exploratory wells have been drilled and county permits have alluded to the use of fracking as part of their planned exploratory drilling. Fracking is a technique that uses water and or other fluids to build up underground pressure in order to fracture and open up rock formations to make it easier to

obtain the pockets of petroleum buried in the rock.

Street condition and lighting: Only one resident identified the condition of the streets as an important concern. Broken pavement, lack of pavement, potholes, and the lack of sidewalks were also mentioned by this resident.

1.9 Enhanced Community Outreach Recommendations

For DTSC's upcoming decision regarding the proposed Class III permit modification that seeks expansion of the facility's B-18 hazardous waste landfill unit, DTSC will increase its outreach and public involvement activities. DTSC wants to enhance its public involvement in order to give Kettleman City residents every opportunity to participate in the permit process. This decision is partially in response to the high visibility of the decision and also partially in response to the importance of decision itself.

11 interviewees spoke of feeling fearful and shut out during a large community meeting format. In light of this sentiment, DTSC will hold a public availability sessions or community workshops where residents and others can talk one on one with DTSC project team members about issues and concerns they have regarding the facility. DTSC will continue to provide simultaneous interpretation from English into Spanish as well as Spanish into English.

Federal and state law requires that DTSC hold a public hearing to gather public comment on the proposed permit decision. While DTSC will also meet with any group on the proposal, and will hold a series of small group meetings, as necessary. The small group setting by invitation will allow for an open dialogue. DTSC heard from several interviewees of reprisals occurring after large public meetings if others were upset with the sharing of opinions different their own opinion.

Several interviewees suggested a starting time of 7 p.m. instead of earlier times in order to make it easier for workers who want to attend the public hearing or the public availability session. This suggestion has been implemented.

In order to reach the maximum number of Kettleman City residents and others interested in this decision, DTSC will mail the translated Fact Sheet/Community Notice so that it arrives in stakeholders' and residents' boxes at least a month prior to the scheduled public hearing date.

Because of the level of technical information DTSC will generate Fact Sheets using language that is clearer and less technical. This level of writing will allow for more focus on our accuracy in describing the proposal, the facility and the process. This approach allows more flexibility in using non-technical descriptions to better communicate DTSC's proposed actions.

Several young interviewees mentioned Twitter and text messaging as useful communication tools. DTSC will establish a Twitter address to send information on public involvement opportunities. In addition, a week before the public availability session, DTSC will send reminder post cards to all residents who have P.O. boxes. Along with these reminders, DTSC will arrange to display the cards in various public gathering places in Kettleman City (Post Office, the Library, the two grocery markets, the Community Services District and possibly local churches etc.).

Beyond these outreach tools, DTSC will also place extensive information on its web site for stakeholders to download or review, even though only a few Kettleman City residents have Internet access.

Also, based on an agreement with People for Clean Air and Water as well as Greenaction forged at a meeting in 2010, DTSC will translate into Spanish all executive summaries from all decision documents for this facility.

Required outreach

- Public Notice and Fact Sheet (English and Spanish)
- Public Hearing (English and Spanish)
- Radio Advertisement (English and Spanish)

- Interpretation of the public hearing
- Placement of information on the DTSC Web site

Enhanced Public Involvement Activities

- More frequent Public availability sessions
- Posting of notices at the most frequently visited public locations; post office, schools, churches, markets etc.
- Post card reminders;
- Small group briefings;
- Tweets and Text messages;
- Translation of Executive Summaries of documents;
- Asking the Kettleman City Elementary school to hand deliver information to school children who will take it home to their parents;
- Identify trusted community members and garner their support to encourage and invite residents to participate in activities.

2.0 DTSC's Role as a Catalyst for Kettleman City

A number of possibilities in the role of a convener are open to DTSC. As a convener of information, DTSC will be looking at opportunities to inform and educate the various involved agencies regarding concerns gathered during our in-depth community assessment efforts.

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