

Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

T – 11 – 12 Deborah O. Raphael, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE November 15, 2012 Contact: Charlotte Fadipe (916) 956-2838

DTSC Cracks Down on Kettleman Facility for Failing to Report Hazardous Waste Spills

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), today announced tough enforcement action against Chemical Waste Management (CWM) facility in Kettleman City. DTSC issued 72 violations, to the facility for failing to report hazardous waste spills on its property. This case, which has been referred to the Attorney General's Office, is expected to result in substantial fines being levied against the facility.

Chemical Waste Management (CWM) is a commercial California landfill facility permitted to dispose of or treat and store hazardous waste and municipal solid waste (such as everyday trash). The facility is located in western Kings County, California, bordering the San Joaquin Valley.

"It is troubling to me that Chemical Waste Management violated their current permit by not reporting these spills to DTSC, particularly after having been down this road with them a year ago," said Brian Johnson, DTSC Deputy Director of Enforcement. "Although there is no evidence that suggests harm to the community, it is not acceptable to deprive DTSC of information that informs us how well a facility is operating. This is a clear violation of the rules."

Trucks from all over California bring hazardous and nonhazardous material to the Kettleman landfill. The spills mostly occurred in the loading area of the facility and the sampling area. Examples of wastes spilled include herbicides; lead contaminated soil, PCB's, and other chemicals. There is no evidence to suggest that the landfill's violations posed any danger to nearby communities or workers at the facility or the environment.

The 72 spills, which occurred during June 2008-2012, were contained on site. In most cases the size of the spill was less than five pounds. Although the spills were small in volume and did not result in impacts to surrounding communities, CWM's permit requires that DTSC be notified so that spill cleanup is documented and to help evaluate how well the facility operates.

During a routine inspection in April 2012, DTSC discovered that CWM had created an internal record of spills but had failed to notify DTSC. CWM's current permit requires verbal notification within 24 hours of a hazardous waste spill and written notification within 10 days of the discovery of the release.

In May 2011, DTSC ordered CWM to pay \$46,000 in penalties for a similar failure to report releases of hazardous waste. (Click here for details).

To see the Notices of Violation click here

For more information about the facility click here

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The Mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated properties, identifying and promoting safer ingredients in consumer products, and ensuring stewardship through enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.