



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Department of Toxic Substances Control

## News Release

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Barbara A. Lee, Director

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New DTSC Policy Benefits Environmental Justice and Native American Communities**

**SACRAMENTO** – A new Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) [policy](#) announced today encourages companies and individuals who settle hazardous waste cases to fund projects that benefit California communities most burdened by environmental harm.

Under the new Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) policy, up to 50 percent of fines and penalties could be directed toward projects that improve public health or the environment. The policy prioritizes the use of SEPs in communities where a violation occurred and in environmental justice communities. Federally recognized Native American tribes are also eligible to apply for this funding, and this policy is one of the first in the nation to identify tribal governments as potential recipients. It also describes types of potential SEP projects and requires accountability for all funding.

“This new policy demonstrates our commitment to protecting California’s most environmentally burdened communities,” DTSC Director Barbara A. Lee said. “As the Department enforces California’s hazardous waste laws, we will promote projects that significantly improve the quality of life in areas that need it most.”

DTSC’s new policy is in response to Assembly Bill 1071, which directs all boards, departments, and offices within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to establish a policy on Supplemental Environmental Projects. DTSC’s policy was the first to be developed using a public process.

“It’s gratifying to see the first real result of my bill, AB 1071,” said Speaker Emeritus Toni Atkins (D-San Diego), “Low-income communities in California have been disproportionately impacted by pollution for far too long. I applaud the Department of Toxic Substances Control for moving so quickly to establish a policy that will give residents of these disadvantaged communities another effective tool to clean up their neighborhoods and provide a more healthful future for their children.”

Joint author of the bill, Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia (D-Coachella) said, “Their policy is a great model for all CalEPA departments and boards to pursue. This policy will help improve the health and safety of families in communities such as Mecca or Calexico who would otherwise lack the resources for environmental projects.”

Monsignor John Moretta of Resurrection Church in the Los Angeles community of Boyle Heights

stated, "It is only fair that those communities most impacted have the first chance for any help to mitigate sometimes years and years of pollution and abuse. I applaud the Legislature and DTSC."

While penalties play an important role in environmental protection, SEPs can provide additional public health and environmental benefits. Examples of successful SEPs include: environmental monitoring equipment, environmental skills trainings for communities, and support for community task forces such as the online environmental reporting system, IVAN (Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods), pioneered in Imperial County.

Luis Olmedo, director of Comité Civico Del Valle and founder of the IVAN network said: "It's a good day for Environmental Justice! DTSC's policy sets a precedent and mechanism that goes beyond laws and regulations for making meaningful improvements in reducing environmental burdens and improving public health. Bravo!"

The new policy was adopted after extensive outreach and engagement with environmental justice and Native American communities. DTSC held public workshops in Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland, Brawley and Monterey.

Gustavo Aguirre Jr., Coordinator for Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN) stated, "We are excited to have worked with DTSC in the development of this policy. SEPs represent a step in the right direction to mitigate disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged communities statewide. With this policy in place, communities will play a strong role in directing fines for violations into programs that can improve their environment and lives."

To read DTSC's full SEP policy, visit: [https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/GetInvolved/SEPS\\_Policy.cfm](https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/GetInvolved/SEPS_Policy.cfm)



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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://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 resources, enforcing hazardous waste laws, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.***