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Managing Hazardous Waste

*Preventing environmental damage from hazardous waste, and restoring contaminated sites for all Californians.*

Public Involvement

Cleanup

Science & Tech



State of  
California



Department of Toxic  
Substances Control

# Public Involvement

FACT SHEET, May 2005

## You can comment on the Romic Draft Permit and Draft EIR



### Introduction

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has prepared this fact sheet to provide you updated information about the Draft Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (Draft Permit) and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) prepared for Romic Environmental Technologies Corporation (Romic). DTSC plans to make a decision on the Draft Permit and the Draft EIR. We invite you to comment and attend a public workshop and a public hearing on this proposal.

### Previous permits were issued in 1986 and 1992

Romic received a five-year permit from DTSC with an expiration date of 1991. DTSC modified the state permit in July 1990 to include a revised waste analysis plan, a revised closure plan and additional permit conditions. In July 1992, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) issued a ten-year federal permit to Romic for the storage of hazardous waste. DTSC has been overseeing both the state and federal permit. If approved, all regulated hazardous waste management activities

### **Public Workshop and Hearing**

**Public Workshop starts at 11:00 AM on Saturday, June 11, 2005.**

**Public Hearing starts at 6:30 PM on Thursday, June 30, 2005.**

**We will hold both meetings at Cesar Chavez Academy, Cafeteria, 2450 Ralmar Street, East Palo Alto, California 94303**

**For information on accessibility, please call Nathan Schumacher at toll free**

**(866) 495-5651 one week in advance of the event.**



will now be included in a single permit because U.S. EPA has now authorized DTSC to carry out all hazardous waste permitting programs.

A facility typically submits a request for a new permit at least 180 days before the previous one expires. If they do so, they are allowed to continue operating under the terms of the old one until the new one is either approved or denied. In June 1993 DTSC issued a public notice of its intent to issue a new permit. Community groups requested DTSC to prepare an Environmental Impact Report before making a permit decision. This request was agreed to, thus delaying the permit decision. Romic has been required to follow the terms of the U.S. EPA permit that expired in 2002 and the terms of the state permit that expired in 1991.

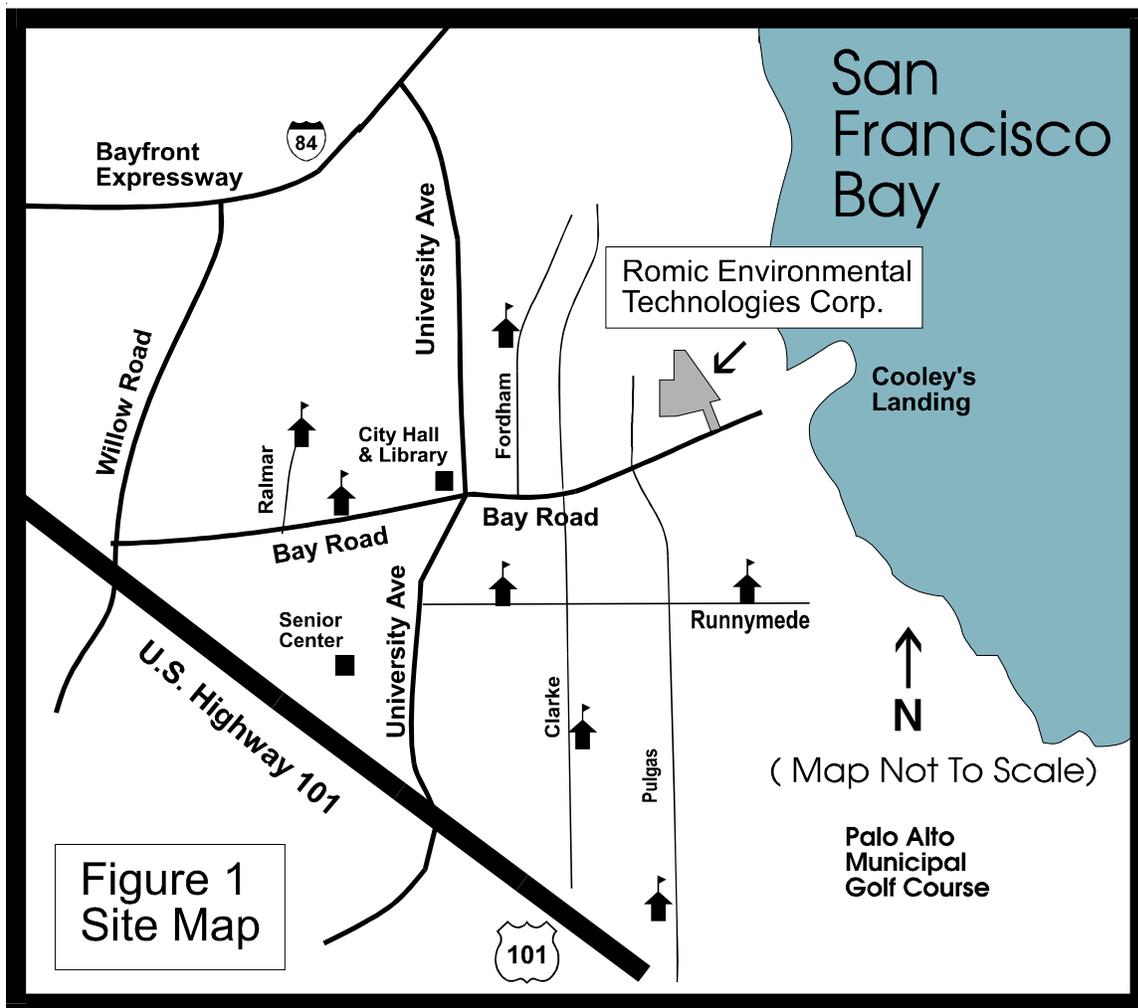
### Romic is located in an industrial area

Romic is located in an industrial area of East Palo Alto at 2081 Bay Road. Romic sits on 14-acres, about one-half mile west of the San Francisco Bay and is bordered to the north and east by a tidal marsh.

Neighbors include auto dismantling yards, a Pacific Gas and Electric substation, and a closed facility formerly owned by Catalytica Corporation. Residences are about 2,000 feet to the west. An elementary school is about one-half mile away, and the Ravenswood Preserve to the east provides recreational opportunities for cyclists, hikers, and bird watchers. Please see the site map below.

### Romic recycles hazardous waste

Registered hazardous waste haulers, including Romic, transport hazardous waste from customers to the Romic Facility for storage, treatment and recycling. Romic also operates a rail spur facility located at the Port of Redwood City that transfers hazardous waste to and from railcars. Romic's operations at the rail spur are covered under a separate permit and are not part of this Draft Permit. Romic mostly receives waste from industrial businesses. Examples of waste Romic accepts include paint thinner, antifreeze, discarded paints and oils, inks, and adhesives.



Romic treats waste using different methods. One method, called distillation, uses heat to separate components in a chemical mixture according to their different boiling points. After this treatment, Romic produces recycled solvents that they sell to businesses. Another treatment method combines similar wastes that have high energy content to be used as substitute fuel. This is called fuel blending. The recycled waste fuel is then sent to cement manufacturers and burned in place of oil, natural gas, or coal. Romic needs a hazardous waste permit to store waste or use these and other waste treatment methods.

Romic has been in operation at the East Palo Alto location since 1963. Prior owners have also used the site for recycling chemicals since 1956.

### Existing authorized activities

Romic was authorized in the previous Permits to store wastes in containers and 50 storage tanks, and to treat wastes in 30 treatment tanks and 25 other treatment units such as distillation column, fuel blending, sorting and consolidation. In an August 2000, Partial Consent Order, DTSC authorized that Romic's 33 product tanks be used as hazardous waste tanks. This order was the result of a DTSC inspection.

### Enforcement History

DTSC conducts inspections at Romic annually. DTSC last inspected Romic on June 28, 2004. On April 7, 2005, DTSC and the State Attorney General Officer announced an \$849,500 settlement with Romic which resolves hazardous waste violations that occurred at both the East Palo Alto Romic facility and the Redwood City Romic facility. These violations occurred from 1999 to 2004.

The settlement includes major violations. Among them are storing hazardous waste in unauthorized containers and in unauthorized areas, treating hazardous waste in unauthorized units, and modifying equipment without prior DTSC authorization. You may view the settlement documents including the Consent Order, Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgement, and the Civil Complaint at the East Palo Alto Public Library and on the web at <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Romic/index.html>.

### Changes from the existing activities

This Draft Permit has the following changes:

- 1) Purchase and install 15 new units for hazardous waste management. These include 10 new tanks and 5 new treatment units.
- 2) Increase tank storage capacity by 244,901 gallons and container storage by 178,150 gallons. Also, it will increase container storage for solids by 252 cubic yards. Tables 1 and 2 on Page Four compare the units and capacity from what DTSC has authorized currently to what DTSC has in the Draft Permit.
- 3) Have dual purpose tanks -- tanks that both store and treat hazardous waste. Dual purpose tanks allow compatible but non-identical liquids to be stored in the same tank. DTSC considers the process of combining two non-identical liquids as treatment. It cannot be done in a tank authorized as storage only.
- 4) Convert existing equipment and 50 tanks to hazardous waste units. For example, the Draft Permit reclassified 33 tanks that previously stored product as hazardous waste storage tanks, as required by the Partial Consent Order. Hazardous waste tanks are subject to additional financial requirements, inspections and regulations which product storage tanks are not. Please see Table 1 on Page Four for more detail.
- 5) The Draft Permit includes existing treatment processes and units such as neutralization, solvent recycling, fractionation, wastewater treatment, fuel blending, liquefaction, antifreeze recycling, lab-packing, and some new treatment processes and units.

New treatment processes included in the Draft Permit are:

- Crushing contaminated drums, (Romic currently can only crush uncontaminated drums.);
- Washing contaminated tanker trucks, (Romic currently can only wash trucks that met the standard of "empty");
- Depressurizing aerosol cans;
- Using a new shredder unit for solids;
- Dewatering and stabilizing sludge (squeezing out water from sludge for transportation to a landfill), and

- Consolidating and repackaging solids (sorting solids like gloves and rags while inside a contained booth).

**Other documents are prepared to help us evaluate the permit**

DTSC has prepared several documents to help determine the effects of the Draft Permit on human health and the environment.

**Human Health Risk Assessment:**

Under DTSC oversight, Romac prepared a health risk assessment in 2003. The document contains both a human health risk assessment and an ecological risk assessment. A health risk assessment is used to evaluate the potential impacts on human health. DTSC held a public meeting on the health risk assessment in September 2003. You can also find more about the risk assessments in a June 2003 DTSC fact sheet that is on our website at <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Romac/index.html>.

**Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR):**

DTSC prepared a Draft EIR to examine possible environmental impacts associated with the Draft Permit. The Draft EIR compared the potential impacts from the expansion of Romac (if DTSC approves the Draft Permit) to the current authorized Romac operation. The Draft EIR studied the following areas that may be impacted by a decision to approve the Draft Permit: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology and Soils; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; Public Services; Transportation and Traffic and Utilities and Service Systems. DTSC decided the following areas would not be potentially impacted and the Draft EIR lists the reasons why they would not be further examined: Agricultural Resources; Mineral Resources; Population and Housing; and Recreation.

**TABLE 1  
Comparison of Capacity  
Between the Existing and Proposed Permits**

|                                    | EXISTING AUTHORIZED CAPACITY                         | PROPOSED PERMIT CAPACITY             |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Container Storage (drums and bins) | 139,205 Gallons (liquid)<br>+ 68 cubic yards (solid) | 317,355 Gallons<br>+ 320 cubic yards |
| Tank Storage                       | 548,553 Gallons                                      | 793,454 Gallons                      |
| Treatment                          | 154,512 Gallons per day                              | 154,512 Gallons per day              |

**TABLE 2  
Comparison of Units  
Between the Existing and Proposed Permits**

| TYPE OF UNIT                       | NUMBER OF AUTHORIZED UNITS |                        | NUMBER OF UNITS ON PROPOSED PERMIT |                        |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
|                                    |                            |                        |                                    |                        |
| Container Storage                  | 4 storage buildings        | 2,531 drums and 4 bins | 5 storage buildings                | 5,661 drums and 8 bins |
| Storage /Treatment Tanks           | Total                      | 113                    | Total                              | 138                    |
| Treatment Units (other than tanks) | Other Treatment            | 25                     | Other Treatment                    | 28                     |

Findings in the Draft EIR show that while a Romic Permit approval would not result in any significant impacts, it would contribute to significant, irreversible transportation and traffic impacts when considered along with the City of East Palo Alto's Ravenswood District Redevelopment Plan.

A copy of the Draft EIR is available for public review and comment. After the comment period, DTSC will consider all comments and finalize the EIR with or without modifications. DTSC will take its findings into consideration before making a final decision on the Draft Permit.

### **You can learn more and give comments at our public workshop and hearing**

DTSC will hold a public workshop on Saturday, June 11 at 11 AM and the public hearing on Thursday, June 30 at 6:30 PM. We will hold both events at the Cesar Chavez Academy, 2450 Ralmar Street in East Palo Alto. At the workshop, we will give a presentation providing more detail about how we evaluated the permit application and about the Draft EIR. We will answer questions. About three weeks after the public workshop, we will hold a public hearing when we will accept public comments on these documents. All comments will be recorded by a court reporter for the record.

### **You can participate in our permitting decisions**

You can review the Draft Permit, permit application, and the Draft EIR, at the locations listed below. We have also placed a copy of the Health Risk Assessment there for your reference.

San Mateo County Public Library  
East Palo Alto Branch  
2415 University Avenue  
East Palo Alto, California 94303  
(650) 321-7712 - call for hours of operation

Department of Toxic Substances Control  
Berkeley Office  
700 Heinz Avenue, Suite 200  
Berkeley, California 94710  
(510) 540-3800 - please call for an appointment

You can send any written comment to us between May 31, 2005, and July 29, 2005, in the following ways:

Mail written comments to:

Wei Wei Chui, Section Chief  
Department of Toxic Substances Control  
700 Heinz Avenue, Suite 200  
Berkeley, California 94710

Send your comment by e-mail to: [WChui@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:WChui@dtsc.ca.gov)  
or

Submit an oral or written comment at our hearing on June 30, 2005 at 6:30 P.M.

DTSC will make the final decision on the Draft Permit and Draft EIR only after public comments have been received and considered. At the close of the public comment period, DTSC will respond to comments received during the public comment period (including those given at the hearing and those submitted to us in writing during the comment period) in a Response to Comments Document. DTSC will place a copy of this document at the library and on our website.

### **You can contact us if you have further questions**

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the following staff:

Wei Wei Chui, Section Chief  
700 Heinz Avenue, Suite 200  
Berkeley, CA 94710  
(510) 540-3975  
[WChui@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:WChui@dtsc.ca.gov)

Nathan Schumacher, Public Participation Specialist  
8800 Cal Center Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95826  
Toll-free (866) 495-5651 or (916) 255-3650  
[NSchumac@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:NSchumac@dtsc.ca.gov)

### ***For media inquiries, please contact:***

Angela Blanchette, Public Information Officer  
700 Heinz Avenue, Suite 200  
Berkeley, CA 94710  
(510) 540-3732  
[Ablanche@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:Ablanche@dtsc.ca.gov)

**Anuncio**

Si prefiere hablar con alguien en español acerca de ésta información, favor de llamar a Fernando Amador, Departamento de Control de Sustancias Tóxicas. El número de teléfono es (916) 255-3737.

Cut out and mail

*ARE YOU ON DTSC'S MAILING LIST?*

If you would like to be on the mailing list, fill out the information below and mail back to:  
Nathan Schumacher, DTSC, 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento CA 95626

Please print name and address clearly.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Please take me off the mailing list.

Note: While the mailing list is solely for DTSC use, the list is considered a public record.

*Notice to Hearing Impaired*

TDD users can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at: 1-888-877-5378.  
Please ask them to contact Nathan Schumacher at (916) 255-3650 regarding Romic.