



News Release

T – 03 – 13

Deborah O. Raphael, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2013

Contact: Sanford (Sandy) Nax
916-327-6114

Sandy.Nax@dtsc.ca.gov

Topock Compressor Station Lawsuit Settled

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and Fort Mojave Indian Tribe have settled a 2011 lawsuit regarding a groundwater remedy and environmental review in a region of San Bernardino County that is culturally significant to Native Americans. The settlement is also the first step toward eventual removal of a groundwater treatment plant.

The settlement stems from a complaint, in Sacramento County Superior Court, that challenged DTSC's approval of a freshwater injection system and related Environmental Impact Report. The groundwater remedy is part of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's [Topock Compressor Station](#) Groundwater Remediation Project.

Under the settlement the DTSC will:

- Approve decommissioning a groundwater treatment plant in the Topock Maze area after a plume of contaminated water is cleaned up. It is anticipated the decommissioning and removal of the groundwater treatment plant could be in 2017;
- Oversee other remedies that will control the contamination. These include the installation of wells and a freshwater injection system;
- Will invite interested Native American tribes to a meeting on the scope and status of measures to mitigate the impact on cultural resources, and will meet specifically with the Fort Mojave tribe to discuss ways of minimizing cultural impacts at the Topock site under the new cleanup plan.

In return, the Fort Mojave tribe will dismiss the lawsuit, agrees not to sue or pursue future claims against [DTSC](#), and will pay the department \$60,000 to cover costs of preparing the administrative record. In a separate settlement, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E) agreed to pay \$45,000 to DTSC for similar costs.

“We deeply respect that this land is sacred, and believe the settlement honors the sanctity of the site and is protective of human health and the water of the Colorado River,” said DTSC Director Debbie Raphael. “We look forward to continuing a productive and responsive relationship with the Fort Mojave Indian tribe.”

The station compresses natural gas for transportation through pipelines to PG&E customers, but, beginning in the 1950s and continuing into the 1970s, contamination from cooling towers was discharged into a natural wash adjacent to the station, and then into the groundwater.



###

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.