

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
FOR THE PG&E TOPOCK COMPRESSOR STATION

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

City Council Chamber
2360 McCulloch Blvd. North
Lake Havasu City, AZ

Monday, June 2, 2008

2:00-5:00 P.M.

<p>Transcribed by Statewide Transcription Services On Behalf of EDAW</p>
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REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

- KATHIE SCHIEVELBEIN - DTSC
- WILLIAM BECKMAN - DTSC
- AARON YUE - DTSC
- JEANNE MATSUMOTO - DTSC
- BOBBETTE BIDDULPH - EDAW
- LESLIE REDFORD - EDAW
- LEAHA MURPHY - EDAW
- NANCY GRAHAM - EDAW

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** Thank you for being here and thank you to
3 Lake Havasu City for allowing us to use their Council
4 Chambers. It's a very nice room. My name is Jeanne
5 Matsumoto and I'm a Public Participation Specialist
6 with the Department of Toxic Substances Control. And
7 DTSC, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, is
8 one of the departments within California Environmental
9 Protection Agency and it is the lead regulatory agency
10 for the environmental investigation and clean-up of
11 the Topock Compressor Station. Now, before we get
12 started, we have some handouts. You should have a
13 copy of the presentation, the slides, an agenda,
14 possibly a green meeting evaluation form. If you fill
15 that one out, you leave it on the table as you leave,
16 that helps me in case we can improve this meeting or
17 maybe it's (inaudible). Let me know. There's also a
18 comment form and because this is a small group, we
19 won't be using the comment forms today. If you choose
20 not to make a verbal comment today, that's fine. We
21 understand. Written comments can be accepted all the
22 way up until July 1st. We'll have contact information
23 up on later slides. We understand. I don't always
24 like to stand up and make comments. The reason we're
25 here is DTSC is collecting input for the Environmental

1 Impact Report for the environmental investigation and
2 clean-up of the Topock Compressor Station. It's our
3 intention to seek input from agencies, tribal
4 government representatives and members, stakeholders,
5 and the public. By input, we're looking for
6 environmental issues you think should be analyzed and
7 possible clean-up alternatives. That's what we're
8 looking for. The input will be used to develop the
9 EIR and comments made today will be addressed in the
10 EIR and we won't be responding to the comments today.
11 So, if you have a comment, when we open it up for
12 comments, if you would stand and give your first name
13 for conversational purposes. We won't be recording
14 your name; it will not be part of the administrative
15 record. We are recording in two different ways. One
16 is a small digital recording will be made and the
17 other is a graphic recording on the wall. We ask that
18 you save your questions until we've actually closed
19 the official comment portion of the meeting and then
20 we'd be happy to stay around and answer whatever
21 questions you may have. The agenda, first will be a
22 brief introduction, followed by the project
23 background, then a description of the EIR process, and
24 comments, why we're here. We'll close the meeting and
25 be happy to answer any questions. Introductions, the

1 DTSC Team has Watson and Karen, Aaron, the Project
2 Manager who is here today, and myself. We also have,
3 from the office of planning and environmental
4 analysis, Kathie and Bill, and Susan Wilcox, who is
5 not here today. The EDAW Team, EDAW is an independent
6 contractor that's helping develop the EIR. We have
7 Bobbette, Jamie, who's not here today, Leaha, is here,
8 she's working hard back there, and Leslie, who's also
9 working hard, Nancy, and Stev. And at this time, I
10 would like to turn it over to Aaron, the Project
11 Manager.

12 **MR. YUE:** Thank you, Jeanne. Well, thank you, ladies and
13 gentleman, for spending your valuable time with us
14 this afternoon. As Jeanne has already mentioned, my
15 name is Aaron Yue. I am actually the Project Manager
16 for Topock Compressor Station project and today, my
17 portion of the presentation is just to provide some
18 information about the project and its background, and
19 also what the investigation has been up to now and
20 also the clean-up process and the project background.
21 The project site is actually located about 15 miles
22 southeast of Needles, California and the area is
23 really considered as having a lot of cultural and
24 spiritual significance to the Native American people.
25 The site is actually also surrounded by land that's

1 owned and managed by the Department of Interior,
2 specifically managed by the Bureau of Land Management
3 and also a portion of the land is owned by the Bureau
4 of Reclamation and is managed by the Havasu Wildlife
5 Refuge. And this is basically a map showing you where
6 the Topock Compressor Station is in relationship to
7 the I-40 and the Colorado River. It is somewhat of a
8 large scale map. You can't really tell much in great
9 detail in this particular slide, it's also in the
10 handout. But then we do have an aerial photo in the
11 back that you can (inaudible) later after the meeting.
12 The operational history, what has taken place at the
13 site, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has owned and
14 operated the station since 1951 and main operation at
15 the Compressor Station is really to compress the gas
16 that's coming in from Midwest and Southwest area in
17 route to their customers in Northern and Central
18 California. The Compressor Station adds pressure to
19 the pipeline to move the natural gas to Central and
20 Northern California. As the process of adding
21 pressure to the pipeline, heat gets built up. So,
22 they really would require some way of cooling down
23 that gas line. This is an overview of an older aerial
24 photo of what the Compressor Station looked like.
25 Here's the actual compressor engine itself, and these

1 are the cooling towers used to cool the pipeline. In
2 this particular photo, this is actually a replaced,
3 new cooling tower. What the cooling tower does, as
4 I've mentioned earlier, it's used to cool down the
5 pipeline as the gas is compressed. And as a process
6 of cooling the pipeline, the water gets more saline
7 over time as the water evaporates and gets used up.
8 So, PG&E actually, since 1951 to about 1985, added
9 hexavalent chromium to the cooling water to control
10 corrosion to prevent the equipment from breaking down
11 and to protect the pipeline. And as part of their
12 operation, they have to get rid of some of the spent
13 cooling water and they discharged it and they
14 discharged the spent cooling water to a wash called
15 the Bat Cave Wash. And over time, the hexavalent
16 chromium actually seeped through the soil and into the
17 groundwater. So, currently there is a hexavalent
18 chromium plume that is extending from the dry wash
19 area, the area of discharge, towards the Colorado
20 River. And you really can't see it, the lighting is
21 really bad, but this is actually the projection of the
22 current plume. I'm hoping the handout shows it a
23 little better. This particular aerial photo really
24 shows you a projection of the footprint of the
25 contamination directly in a vertical fashion. If you

1 look back at this particular photo, you will see that
2 the hexavalent chromium seems to (inaudible) south.
3 What we've found over time and during our
4 investigation, is that the hexavalent chromium, as
5 represented by this green area here, really extends a
6 little beyond the bottom of the river. See that
7 vertical projection? But it is 80 feet below the
8 water, the bottom of the river itself. This area
9 represents the groundwater that's at the site. And
10 so, this is actually a vertical slice, if you will, of
11 this particular area right through here. So, just a
12 portion of what you see is a vertical slice so you can
13 see what it looks like. Let's talk a little bit about
14 the investigation and the clean-up process. Like all
15 regulatory agencies, the Department of Toxic
16 Substances Control is in charge of figuring out really
17 three major factors for the clean-up. One is how bad
18 is the situation, what do we need to do to clean-up
19 the site, and then the third step, finally, is to
20 clean up the site. Under the regulatory jurisdiction,
21 the Department of Toxic Substances Control is cleaning
22 up the site under RCRA authorization for the Resource
23 Conservation and Recovery Act. As part of that act,
24 or at least the documentation, comes out of the three
25 different steps. The first step, how bad is it, is

1 captured under a report we call the RCRA facility
2 investigation report. (Inaudible) volume two which
3 documents the groundwater contamination, is about to
4 be released by PG&E fairly shortly. I think the
5 anticipated date is early July. The second step, how
6 should we clean it up, that falls under the Corrective
7 Measure Study/Feasibility Study, that's produced by
8 the federal (inaudible), and that is anticipated to
9 come out in the near future. It hasn't been put
10 together yet, so we are in the preliminary stage of
11 trying to decide how we should actually clean up the
12 site. And then finally, clean up the site, what we
13 need to do, have the public notice and gathering the
14 public input. The Department will select the final
15 remedy. This slide goes back a little bit about how
16 the situation is at the site. PG&E over time has
17 essentially installed well over 150 groundwater wells
18 and currently they're actively monitoring those wells
19 to determine what the plume boundary is like. At the
20 same time, PG&E is actively also gathering river
21 samples at nine different locations along the river
22 and also taken sediment studies, some samples, and I
23 guess the river water contains sediments and at this
24 point the Department has determined that there is no
25 impact to the Colorado River. At present, the

1 groundwater investigation is almost complete. We know
2 currently, as we can see in the past diagram, where
3 the (inaudible) is at, we know the extend of the
4 plume. And again, the river water is not impacted by
5 the plume. If you have been to the site or know
6 anything about the site, you'll realize that there is
7 a treatment plant that's currently operating at the
8 Compressor Station. Back in 2004, PG&E installed a
9 well near the Colorado River, approximately 60 or 70
10 feet away from the river, and detected hexavalent
11 chromium. So, the Department, at that particular
12 point, had instructed and required PG&E to begin
13 extracting some the contaminated groundwater to ensure
14 that the hexavalent chromium does not get into the
15 Colorado River and impact the river itself. And we're
16 pleased to announce that the Department interim
17 measure has been operating and is operating
18 successfully keeping that plume away from the river
19 and up to now, we've demonstrated that there is
20 groundwater (inaudible) that is maintained away from
21 the river, so the water is actually kept away from the
22 river itself. Since 2004, PG&E has extracted
23 approximately 200 million gallons of contaminated
24 groundwater and has recovered over 4,700 pounds of
25 chromium. We've been talking a lot about the water

1 itself, but what about the soil contamination. There
2 is potential soil contamination at the site. PG&E has
3 identified 29 areas their investigating as part of
4 their overall site investigation. PG&E has also
5 drafted a couple of soil sampling work plans and it's
6 currently being reviewed and is pending approval.
7 Because of the fact that the groundwater is so close
8 to the river, the Department has placed an emphasis on
9 the cleaning up of the groundwater, ahead of the soil.
10 As we can see, a lot of our discussion today, as well
11 as part of the EIR, the focus is mainly on the
12 groundwater. The final groundwater and soil clean-up
13 technologies really will be evaluated in the upcoming
14 documents under the Correct Measure Study and the
15 Feasibility Study and also some of the impact of each
16 one of those technologies will be evaluated in the
17 final impact report, which is the reason why we are
18 here today, is that we're beginning to collect
19 information to draft the EIR. Finally, again, once we
20 have received all the comments from the public after
21 we publish the EIR, The Department of Toxic Substances
22 Control will select a final remedy based on several
23 criteria's and after that we will begin the final
24 remedy. So, at this point, that's it for the
25 background of the site. I will turn the presentation

1 over to Bobbette.

2 **MS. BIDDULPH:** Thank you, Aaron. And what I'm going to do
3 is just talk a little bit about the California
4 Environmental Quality Act and the process that we're
5 basically entering into at this stage, but before I do
6 that, what I really would like to emphasize today is
7 that we're really at the beginning of that process and
8 this meeting is one of the many meetings that we're
9 having to gather input to help us define the scope of
10 the EIR, that's basically the level of the technical
11 studies, what are the questions that we need to answer
12 in the EIR, what are the issues that need to be
13 analyzed. We've been think ourselves, we've been
14 talking to DTSC about what those questions and issues
15 may be, but of course, we need input from agencies and
16 the public, as well the tribes, will help us make sure
17 that we answer all of those questions. Now, as some
18 of you may know, in this case, an Environmental Impact
19 Report is required for the Topock remediation project.
20 An Environmental Impact Report is required by the
21 California Environmental Quality Act. As a public
22 agency, DTSC must prepare an EIR for any project that
23 might have a significant affect on the environment.
24 In this case, as Aaron mentioned, we're going to be
25 looking at the clean-up efforts, the potential

1 environmental impacts that those clean-up efforts
2 might have for two things, that's both the groundwater
3 and the soils. And as Aaron mentioned, there are
4 going to be alternative approaches to addressing and
5 cleaning up that current contamination, and those
6 alternative approaches, the most feasible alternative
7 approaches, are going to be described in the Corrective
8 Measures Study and the Feasibility Study. Now,
9 because we're putting more emphasis on the groundwater
10 water clean-up, there's actually going to be more
11 information known about the how's and the ways in
12 which the groundwater contamination is going to be
13 potentially cleaned up. So, that very specific
14 analysis, the Environmental Impact Report is going to
15 look at those activities related to the groundwater
16 clean-up in a very detailed manner. However, we might
17 not have as much information about the soil clean-up
18 activities because the priority is on the groundwater,
19 so we're going to do the best that we can in this
20 Environmental Impact Report to talk about where the
21 soil contamination may be and also the ways in which
22 that soil contamination will be cleaned up. But there
23 might not be as much known about the details of those
24 clean-up activities and for that reason, this is going
25 to be a Program EIR for that element. What that means

1 is that we're going to look at those potential impacts
2 in a broad way, but it very well could be that future
3 environmental studies are necessary as we know more
4 specifics about the soil clean-up activities. The
5 term for that is we'll actually tier off of that first
6 Environmental Impact Report to address those more
7 specific items related to the soil. Now, this is just
8 a broad listing of the environmental topics that we
9 anticipate analyzing in the Environmental Impact
10 Report. This is really a laundry list. This
11 environmental analysis is going to be what we call a
12 Full Scope EIR. That means we're going to be
13 addressing everything that we can think of. And
14 obviously one of the things that we're here to hear
15 from you today is, in looking at these categories,
16 what are some of the sensitive issues that we might
17 need to focus on, as well as are there any that that
18 we maybe have missed. In addition to that listing of
19 environmental topics, the California Environmental
20 Quality Act requires us to look at some other facets
21 when analyzing environmental affects. The first on
22 this listing is alternatives to the project. We're
23 basically going to be thinking about whether there are
24 alternative approaches to the clean-up that could
25 result in fewer environmental affects, if an impact is

1 identified, we'll consider whether or not that impact
2 can be avoided by another alternative and those will
3 be compared in the environmental analysis, so the pros
4 and cons of those different alternatives can be
5 weighed. As well, the document will talk about
6 impacts that have been found to be less than
7 significant, means that they haven't risen to the
8 level of significance and that the mitigation measure
9 isn't necessary. In those cases, we'll describe why
10 impacts aren't considered to be significant
11 substantiation. If we find that impacts where
12 mitigation can't be identified to reduce those impacts
13 to a less than significant level, those will be
14 identified and are known as significant and
15 unavoidable impacts. If those are identified, we'll
16 talk about why mitigation is not possible for that
17 significant impact. As well, the document will
18 summarize significant irreversible changes, things
19 that we can't go back on, as well as growth-inducing
20 impacts. Probably not an issue in this particular
21 project, but we will explore it. Typically growth-
22 inducing is something where you are encouraging growth
23 or population growth or housing growth. So, because
24 this is an environmental clean-up project, likely
25 that's not an issue. But something will potentially

1 be something that we want to explore further and that
2 we're required to explore further is cumulative
3 impacts. And those are impacts where you're
4 considering not only the affects of this proposed
5 project, as well considering those affects in
6 combination with the affects of planned future
7 projects or projects that might be occurring at the
8 same time of the clean-up activities. As I mentioned
9 before, we're really just starting this process of
10 environmental analysis and considering the different
11 clean-up technologies and those environmental affects.
12 This is kind of a listing of the different sources
13 that we're going to use in order to conduct those
14 investigations. We'll be using published data and
15 reports, input from agencies are very important, as
16 well as the ongoing monitoring efforts that Aaron
17 described pulling data from that. We are going to
18 also be outreaching to tribal members to get input
19 from them on cultural resources and Native American
20 resources. And those studies and that outreach will
21 also be something (inaudible) site-specific resource
22 studies that might be necessary to supplement that
23 existing situation. This is just a pretty washed out
24 graphic but there's one in the back, really it just
25 shows our process and where we anticipate public

1 meetings and distribution of public materials. The
2 top line here shows facts sheet distribution, the
3 middle line shows public meetings, and we're basically
4 right here at the Notice of Preparation and scoping
5 meetings. The next step at which we will have an
6 opportunity for input after this scoping period is
7 when the draft EIR is completed. We'll be doing
8 another series of meetings and publishing another
9 facts sheet. At the end of that draft EIR circulation
10 period, we'll also be required by law to respond to
11 all the comments that we've received during that
12 public review period, and those comments will help us
13 finalize the EIR, as well as we will prepare responses
14 to those comments in the final EIR. The completion of
15 that documentation process is anticipated in the
16 Spring of 2010. So, we've kind of said this before
17 but I just want to reiterate that the real purpose of
18 today's meeting is to gather input from you on the
19 environmental issues to be studied in the EIR, any
20 questions that should be addressed by that
21 environmental analysis, whether there are thoughts of
22 mitigation measures that may avoid significant impacts
23 or lessen potential environmental affects, as well as
24 alternatives that you view the same. Additionally,
25 because we don't have all of the remediation

1 technologies perfectly defined at this point, it will
2 be also important to get your questions on the
3 project, project related questions, because that will
4 help us answer the exact nature of remediation
5 technologies and to make sure that we're being clear
6 in that analysis and description of those potential
7 remediation technologies. This slide provides just a
8 summary of the outreach meetings that we're having,
9 like today's; we're in the fourth of five. There is
10 another opportunity after this meeting in Big River
11 and that's this Thursday at 5:00. So, if you know of
12 others that might be interested in coming to a
13 meeting, let them know and they can come. And again,
14 the different ways to provide comments and submit your
15 comments to DTSC and thus to us, is verbally at
16 tonight's meeting, you can do them in writing tonight,
17 provide your comments in writing, or go home or go
18 back to the office and propose those comments and send
19 them into DTSC. But basically, if we could get your
20 comments by July 1st that will ensure that we can input
21 those comments into the consideration of the scope for
22 the EIR. So, with that, I'll turn it over to Jeanne.

23 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** If you would like more information about
24 this project, you can contact Aaron or myself. We
25 also have a media contact, Public Information Officer,

1 Jeanne Garcia. Because of the nature of this project
2 being along the river, we have several repositories.
3 They are listed up there; Needles, Chemehuevi Indian
4 Reservation, the Golden Shores Public Library, the
5 Colorado River Indian Tribes Public Library, and at
6 the Parker Public Library. The official
7 administrative record, which you can also access, is
8 in Cypress, California, Region Four, Department of
9 Toxic Substances Control. One of my favorite ways
10 would be the website. This is kept very current.
11 Documents are uploaded as they occur, so that would be
12 www.dtsc-topock.com. It keeps you informed. It has a
13 nice section on what's new, also a library to access
14 all of these documents. At this time, we would like
15 to open for comments. Anyone?

16 **MALE:** I do have one. Do you want me to stand?

17 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** First thing, you don't have to stand. I
18 understand.

19 **MALE:** It's just a question when Aaron stated about in the
20 last four years the amount of contaminate or chromium
21 that's been recovered I think it was 4,700 pounds?

22 **MR. YUE:** Correct, since 2004.

23 **MALE:** that's the groundwater? I guess my question would
24 be, in the groundwater and the soils, is there an
25 estimate as to how many pounds may exist?

1 **MR. YUE:** We've done the (inaudible) calculation and
2 unfortunately I don't have that off the top of my
3 head. I don't know if Kurt, if you know.

4 **MALE:** A good question that's similar to that. One
5 percent, is it a half a percent? Is significant
6 progress being made as far as removing it?

7 **MR. YUE:** Since 2004?

8 **MALE:** Right. Is that 4,700 pounds a significant number, I
9 guess is my question.

10 **MR. YUE:** I think there's still plenty more to go and
11 that's why we're just relying on that interim measure.
12 It would take a long, long time for that.

13 **MALE:** If that were the formula, I'm not trying to pin you
14 down, in four years, 4,700 pounds; is it going to be
15 100 years before it's gone, 50 years, 20 years?
16 Somebody must have made some kind of calculation.

17 **MR. YUE:** Yeah, we've made that calculation. It depends on
18 how many volumes of water that you flush through and
19 basically it would be (inaudible).

20 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** Yes?

21 **MALE:** I've got some questions. I'm not sure how this is
22 supposed to work. I'm the Water Resources Coordinator
23 for the city here and I'm also a Liaison for water
24 quality in the city. We have our own chromium plume
25 as well and I've got a couple questions. One, there's

1 got to be an average concentration. I know it varies
2 with plumes. What is your biggest concentration that
3 you've found so far in the plume itself?

4 **MR. YUE:** Hexavalent concentration is about 1200 ppm,
5 somewhere around there.

6 **MALE:** Fifteen ppm.

7 **MALE:** Because I want to kind of compare it to our
8 situation here. Second question, as our Water
9 Resources Coordinator, the water that's being popped
10 for remediation purposes, so far (inaudible) ground
11 (inaudible), you said a couple hundred yards down,
12 which is around 580 feet, give or take; that water is
13 allocated, so who is charged for that water allocation
14 (inaudible)? Have you ever thought about that?

15 **MR, YUE:** I think PG&E is actually allocating the water, so
16 that's PG&E's allocation of water.

17 **MALE:** Must be through the California system them?

18 **MALE:** Yes, we got out allocation that was governed by the
19 City of Needles, but it is PG&E's own allocation.
20 It's not part of a Needles allocation, but we inject
21 92 percent of it back (inaudible).

22 **MALE:** After treatment?

23 **MALE:** Yes, after treatment. So, our allocation dealt with
24 under that basis.

25 **MALE:** Thank you. The types of remediation that you're

1 thinking about, you're going to be presenting
2 alternatives, I'm assuming. Have you had those
3 outlined at all yet or is that part of what we need to
4 input?

5 **MR YUE:** That is in the draft, laid out in the packet.
6 (Inaudible).

7 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** Questions? Any more?

8 **MALE:** Not right at this moment.

9 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** Are there any other comments or questions?

10 **MALE:** In that plume, you say that it's kind of stabilized.
11 Is there any anticipation of that movement being in
12 any particular direction or is it stable where it is?

13 **MR. YUE:** (Inaudible) stable where it's at. Maybe we can
14 talk a little more about the (inaudible).

15 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** Shall I officially close the comments and
16 open it for questions or any other comments?

17 **MALE:** It only seems that way because we don't know enough
18 to really make suggestions or comments that would lead
19 you to some place (inaudible). I have a few questions
20 to answer.

21 **MS. MATSUMOTO:** Well, let me officially close the comment
22 section and now we're open for questions.

23 --oOo--

24 - MEETING ADJOURNED -

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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that I, Kelli Wells,
transcribed the digitally-recorded public meeting of the
California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of
Toxic Substances Control, dated June 2, 2008; that the
pages numbered 1 through 23 constitute said transcript;
that the same is a complete and accurate transcription of
the aforesaid to the best of my ability.

Dated July 1, 2008.



Kelli Wells, Transcriber
Statewide Transcription Services