

COMMUNITY Notice

The mission of DTSC is to protect California’s people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances through the restoration of contaminated resources, enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.

Proposed Modification of Groundwater Treatment Plant Whittier Narrows Operable Unit, San Gabriel Valley Area 1 Superfund Site, South El Monte, California

Para información en español por favor comuníquese con Jesus Cruz al número (916) 255 3315.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) seeks public input on the initial study for a proposed modification of the existing groundwater treatment plant located in South El Monte, California. The proposed modifications will allow the distribution of treated groundwater to the San Gabriel Valley Water Company (SGVWC) for drinking water use. The project involves the approval of design documents for modification of the existing groundwater treatment plant.



Photograph of existing groundwater treatment plant for the Whittier Narrows Operable Unit

Public Comment Period



**30-day Public Comment period,
August 1 through August 30, 2013**

Project related documents are available for review and comment at the locations listed on Page 3. DTSC will make a final decision on approval of the design documents after all public comments have been considered.

Please send comments in writing to:

Christine Bucklin,
Project Manager
DTSC
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, California 90630
Or by email:
cbucklin@dtsc.ca.gov

Comments must be postmarked or emailed by August 30, 2013.

A public meeting has not been scheduled for this project at this time.



Project Background

DTSC is working with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), local water agencies, and others to address groundwater contamination in the San Gabriel Basin. EPA has identified six regions of groundwater contamination at four Superfund Sites (San Gabriel Valley Areas 1 to 4). EPA refers to these regions of groundwater contamination as Operable Units. EPA's latest *Progress Report on San Gabriel Valley Ground Water Cleanup* is available at:

http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/community_involvement/5269215226/SGV_Fact_Sheet_Dec_2011.pdf

The Whittier Narrows Operable Unit addresses groundwater contamination in the southernmost part of the San Gabriel Valley, where groundwater and surface water flow from the San Gabriel Basin to the Central Basin. The contamination is migrating into the Operable Unit from elsewhere in the San Gabriel Basin and presently is found at depths of about 150 to 700 feet below ground surface. The primary contaminants in groundwater in this Operable Unit are tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE). Low levels of 1,4-dioxane and N-nitrosodimethylamine are also present in groundwater.

In 2002, EPA completed construction of a groundwater extraction and treatment system in order to protect the drinking water resource in Whittier Narrows and the adjacent portion of the Central Basin from contamination emanating from the San Gabriel Valley. EPA's existing facilities include a treatment plant, extraction wells, monitoring wells, and pipelines. These facilities are located between the Whittier Narrows Dam to the south, Highway 60 (the Pomona Freeway) to the north, the Rio Hondo to the west, and the San Gabriel River to the east (see figure on page 4).

EPA and the City of Whittier operated the system from 2002 until May 16, 2013 when responsibility for ongoing operations transferred to the State of California. Since May 17, 2013, DTSC and the SGVWC have been operating the groundwater extraction and treatment system on behalf of the State.

Water treated by the system is primarily intended for use as drinking water supply with a lesser amount used to maintain the water level in nearby Legg Lakes.

The City of Whittier used the treated water for drinking water supply from December 2005 until March 2013 when the City elected to stop being the drinking water end user. Until another drinking water end user is connected to the system and approved for drinking water use, the only available disposal option for treated water is discharge to Legg Lakes. Under the current interim operating condition, the system can only be pumped at about 45 to 60 percent of the rate that EPA has determined is necessary to control the contamination migrating through Whittier Narrows.

What is Being Proposed

The proposed modifications to the existing treatment plant will allow distribution of treated water to the SGVWC for drinking water use. The modifications would include construction of a storage tank, booster pump station, a connection between the tank and SGVWC's distribution system (located immediately adjacent to the treatment plant along Durfee Avenue), an emergency connection to the City of Whittier's drinking water distribution system, and relocation of the current chlorination unit. Contingent modifications include the addition of a treatment unit for 1,4-dioxane and the removal or mothballing of up to 18 granular activated carbon vessels. Construction for the tank, booster pump station, and emergency connection, relocation of the chlorination unit, and the contingent modifications are entirely within the fenced area of the plant. Construction for the pipeline to connect the SGVWC distribution line to the treatment plant may extend into Durfee Avenue.

California Environmental Quality Act

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), DTSC has conducted a review of the proposed construction activities and prepared an Initial Study. Although the proposed treatment plant modifications are entirely within existing paved areas and project activities would be restricted to these paved areas, the review determined that implementation of the project could potentially result

in biological impacts if nests are present in adjacent areas that could be disturbed by construction activities.

The review also noted that proposed treatment plant modifications require excavation of localized areas to depths of up to 15 feet. These excavation activities could potentially encounter cultural and archeological resources, although not expected based on surveys and observations during the original plant construction. Finally, the review noted that the project is located within the Whittier Narrows Dam flood control basin and will remove approximately 1.5 acre-feet of the available storage capacity of Whittier Narrows Dam (33,465 acre-feet).

A Mitigated Negative Declaration will be prepared to reduce these potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Next Steps

At the close of the public comment period, DTSC will review and consider all public comments and will ask EPA to make any necessary revisions prior to DTSC's final approval of the design. Also, a Response to Comments document will be mailed to everyone who makes a comment and provides their name and address.

Upon DTSC's approval of the design documents, EPA is expected to begin construction activities in the late fall of 2013. Once started, construction activities are expected to last approximately seven months. EPA anticipates that activities would typically occur Monday through Friday during normal daytime work hours. Periodic Saturday work may occur. Any traffic impacts along Durfee Avenue are expected to be of short duration.

Once construction is complete, SGVWC will test the modified treatment plant and will obtain a permit and approval from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). This testing and approval process may take several months. CDPH will have a separate 30-day public comment period (expected late spring 2014) prior to permitting and approving the system for drinking water use.

Where to Find Project Documents

A copy of the Initial Study and draft CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for public review at the following local information repositories:

Rosemead Library

8800 Valley Boulevard, Rosemead, CA 91770
(626) 573-5220

Tue.-Thurs. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sat. 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

West Covina Library

1601 West Covina Parkway, West Covina, CA 91790
(626) 962-3541

Tue.-Thurs. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sat. 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

A copy of the Initial Study and draft CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration is also available for public review at:

DTSC File Room

5796 Corporate Avenue, CA 90630

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Contact Jone Barrio, phone: (714) 484-5337.

You can also visit the DTSC EnviroStor website at:

http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=60001340

Who to Contact for More Information

For more information about the draft SLP, please contact the following DTSC representatives:

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For media related inquiries, please contact:

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