



## News Release

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Deborah O. Raphael, Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Russ Edmondson

(916) 323-3372

russ.edmondson@dtsc.ca.gov

### **DTSC Issues Draft Decision on Kettleman Facility and Announces Initiative to Reduce Landfill Waste by 50 percent**

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) made two significant announcements today that affect California’s hazardous waste management system.

DTSC released a draft decision on a permit modification that would allow Chemical Waste Management (CWM) to increase the capacity of the hazardous waste landfill in Kettleman Hills. The Department also announced an effort to reduce the amount of hazardous waste disposed in California by 50 percent by the year 2025. The reduction would affect the amount of wastes going to landfills in Kettleman Hills, Buttonwillow near Bakersfield and Westmoreland in Imperial County.

If approved, the permit modification would allow CWM to increase the size of its landfill, which is operating near capacity, by five million cubic yards. The draft decision is subject to a 60-day comment period.

Brian Johnson, Deputy Director of DTSC’s Hazardous Waste Management Program, said the draft decision to allow expansion of CWM’s Kettleman Hills landfill was made following the most comprehensive review of a permit application in California history.

“We understand the importance of this decision as well as the depth of community interest that this facility is operated safely,” Johnson said. “We looked at all facets of its operation as part of our nearly five-year review.”

The draft permit modification includes extensive and stringent conditions that ensure the community is protected from any potential hazards.

For example, the draft modification requires CWM to significantly reduce the amount of diesel emissions from trucks delivering waste, improving the quality of air. Trucks using the facility must meet model year 2007 emissions standards or be manufactured after 2007, when more restrictive air emission standards went into effect in California. Starting in 2018, trucks will have to meet 2010 emission standards, which are even higher.

DTSC’s review took into account the findings of multiple health studies including the “Cal EPA Kettleman City Community Exposure Assessment,” the “California Department of Public Health Birth Defect Study” and results of a US EPA examination of the risks of exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). DTSC also reviewed air and groundwater monitoring data from

the facility.

The review also took into account the facility's enforcement record, dating back to 1983. None of the violations, including a \$311,000 fine in March 2013 for failing to report 72 small spills, caused offsite impacts.

"The facility's response to enforcement actions indicates it is able and willing to take all necessary steps to ensure the community is safe," Johnson said.

Aside from the use of low-emission trucks, additional protections to the community provided by the proposed permit modification include:

- Increased air sampling that allows for the detection of very low concentrations of PCBs;
- Enhanced air monitoring;
- Increased sampling and analysis of water that leaches through and collects in a system below the landfill;
- Enhanced public outreach;
- Improved containment systems to control spills; and
- Annual aerial and land surveys of the landfill to verify CWM estimates of remaining capacity.

DTSC will also enhance its surveillance effort at the facility by increasing inspections and collaborating with US EPA's inspection efforts.

At the same time, DTSC announced an ambitious effort to cut in half the amount of hazardous waste disposed of in California by the year 2025.

California generated an average of 1.7 million tons of hazardous waste each year for the past 10 years. About 600,000 tons ended up annually in the Kettleman or Buttonwillow landfills (the Westmorland facility does not currently accept hazardous waste). Each year, approximately 333,000 tons of waste was shipped to and landfilled in states where environmental regulations are not as strict as California. About 50 percent of the material landfilled at the Kettleman and Buttonwillow facilities comes from contaminated soil removed as part of a cleanup project.

"There is an equity issue for communities that surround the three hazardous waste landfills in California," said DTSC Director Debbie Raphael. "Despite studies that show the landfills are safe, they are bearing the burden of California's hazardous waste disposal, often in combination with many other environmental impacts.

"We must start the discussion on how we can end or significantly reduce our dependence on landfills and develop sustainable solutions that protect this generation and generations to come. Setting a goal for reducing hazardous waste disposal will create incentives that can lead to innovations in science and technology and develop sustainable solutions that protect this generation and generations to come."

DTSC will conduct a dialogue among industry, public interest groups, local governments, elected officials and the public. Meetings across the state will focus on identifying innovative, safe and effective ways for reducing hazardous wastes going to landfills, including developing incentives for reducing the generation of waste.

Raphael said the goal is closely tied to the proposed decision on Kettleman.

“Right now we still generate a significant amount of waste that must be transported, treated or disposed of safely. We want to begin the larger discussion as to how we can greatly reduce hazardous waste going to facilities like Kettleman Hills.”

The 60-day public-comment period for the proposed decision will close September 4, 2013. DTSC will host a community open house on Wednesday July 31 at the Kettleman City Elementary School, a community “drop-in” session on August 1 at the Kettleman City Community Center; and a public hearing on August 27 at the Kettleman City Elementary School.

DTSC will conduct six workshops throughout the state to collect public input on the goal to reduce hazardous waste generation by 50 percent by 2025. The first workshop will take place in the fall of 2013. Locations and times of the workshops will be posted on DTSC’s web site in the near future.

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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 properties, identifying and promoting safer ingredients in consumer products, and ensuring stewardship through enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.***