

Fact Sheet  
February  
2003

# DTSC Invites Public Comment on Soil Cleanup Projects



**Former SPTCo Rail Yard, Sacramento, California**

*It is DTSC's mission to restore, protect and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.*

State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency



## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) invites public comments on three plans. These plans are part of the cleanup of the former Southern Pacific Transportation Company Sacramento Rail Yard. The Sacramento Rail Yard is immediately north of downtown Sacramento. Union Pacific Railroad Company now owns the Rail Yard. DTSC proposes the following plans to clean up contaminated soil at the Rail Yard:

- A Draft Removal Action Workplan for soil in six acres of the Central Shops Study Area of the Rail Yard. This draft plan would result in soil cleanup prior to moving the freight track. Union Pacific wants to realign the existing freight track as part of the redevelopment of the Rail Yard.
- An Asbestos Contingency Plan for the Rail Yard establishes the process to clean up asbestos if found during future digging in Rail Yard soil. This process will be followed during all future soil cleanups at the Rail Yard.
- The Draft Amendment to the 2000 *Final Amended Industrial Wastewater Lagoon Remedial Action Plan for Soil* changes the soil cleanup method. However, this change would affect only the northwestern corner of the Lagoon Study Area.

## Public Comment Period & Public Meeting

DTSC invites public comments on the Draft Removal Action Workplan for Central Shops soil, the Asbestos Contingency Plan, and the Draft Amended Remedial Action Plan for soil in the northwestern corner of the Lagoon Study Area. The public comment period begins: **Tuesday, February 25, 2003**, and ends on **Thursday, March 27, 2003**.

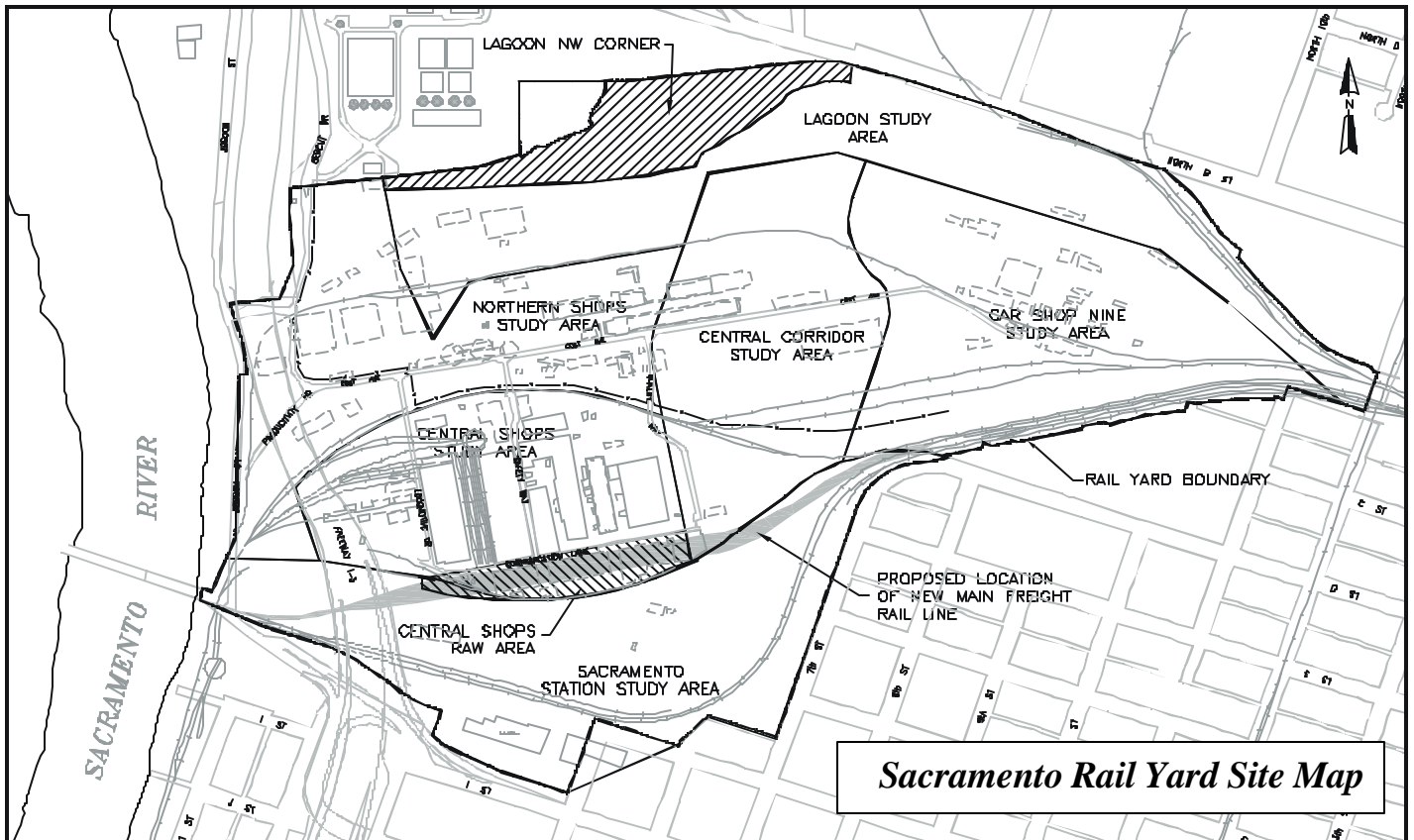
Written comments must be postmarked by March 27, and should be submitted to:

Fernando Amador,  
Project Manager, DTSC,  
8800 Cal Center Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95826

A public meeting to discuss these proposed decisions will be held:

**March 11, 2003**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Sacramento Amtrak Depot**  
**401 I Street, Sacramento**  
**Free Parking Available**

Oral or written questions and comments may also be submitted at this meeting.



## What is the history of the site?

The 240-acre Rail Yard is north of 401 I Street in downtown Sacramento, California. Please see the map above. At the Rail Yard, Southern Pacific built and maintained steam locomotives and railcars starting in 1863. Since the early 1990s, the railroad reduced industrial activities. Union Pacific has torn down most of the buildings in areas where soil cleanup will take place.

Southern Pacific and DTSC signed an Enforceable Agreement in June 1988 to clean up the Rail Yard. This agreement outlines the investigation and cleanup activities. As a result, the agreement divided the Rail Yard into several study areas including the Central Shops and Lagoon Study areas. Under DTSC oversight, Union Pacific has investigated and begun cleanup of the Rail Yard. Union Pacific now wants to modify cleanup plans for these two study areas.

## What will happen in the Central Shops Study Area?

The Central Shops is about 31 acres in the center of the Rail Yard. The crosshatched section on the map shows the six-acre zone to be cleaned up before moving the main freight rail line into this area. This cleanup makes sure that the soil in this area meets the site cleanup levels judged safe for rail line and commercial or industrial land uses.

Investigation results have found cleaning solvents in the soil. Exposure to high amounts of these chemicals over long periods of time can cause cancer. Also found in the soil were elevated levels of lead and other metals.

DTSC and Union Pacific considered four possible plans for cleanup of soil in the six-acre area before selecting the more health-protective and effective proposal. The plan proposes to remove the most contaminated soil to a permitted landfill for disposal. The remaining

contaminated soil will be placed in a secure, fenced area to give naturally occurring bacteria a chance to break down the solvents present in the soil. These bacteria turn the solvents into water and harmless gases such as carbon dioxide.

In the Central Shops Study Area, the work will take place according to the following schedule:

Timeframe	Activity
Winter 2003:	Approval of Plan
Spring 2003:	Begin digging and cleanup
Winter 2003/04	Complete cleanup effort

## What does DTSC plan to do with asbestos?

The soil cleanup in the Rail Yard will go on for a number of years. Union Pacific has already dug up a large amount of soil and will continue digging for three to four more years. During the soil investigations for the two study areas, Union Pacific did not find asbestos. However, recent digging in the Northern Shops Study Area uncovered it in shallow soil. DTSC expects Union Pacific may find more asbestos while digging in other areas of the Rail Yard.

The proposed Asbestos Contingency Plan sets up a process to handle asbestos if found anywhere in the Rail Yard. Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that people have processed for use as insulation, tiles, and automotive brake pads. If inhaled, asbestos fibers can be hazardous to humans and may cause cancer. The goal of the Asbestos Contingency Plan is to prevent release of asbestos fibers to the air. The plan includes the following:

- Before digging, do a review of past records and dig exploratory trenches to find out how likely it is that asbestos will be present;

- Have trained people visually check the digging areas to see if asbestos is present;
- Use soil handling and digging methods that lessen the release of asbestos fibers;
- Collect air samples during digging;
- Use watering trucks to spray down soil to control dust;
- Use separate stock piles to protect workers from asbestos contact; and
- Decide in advance how to manage soils in areas containing asbestos.

Based on air sample results collected at the Rail Yard, using water to wet the soil has controlled the release of asbestos fibers. If air samples detect asbestos during cleanup, work will stop until workers control the release.

## What does DTSC propose for part of the Lagoon Study Area?

The Lagoon Study Area is about 51 acres in the northern and northeastern areas of the Rail Yard (see map). As planned, Union Pacific has already dug out most of the impacted soils within the Lagoon Study Area; however, 11 acres in the northwestern corner need more work.

The soil investigation found cleaning solvents similar to those in the Central Shops Study Area. Also, soil investigations found lead, petroleum fuel wastes, and polychlorinated biphenyls. These chemicals are hazardous. Exposure to high amounts of these chemicals over long periods of time can cause cancer.

For the northwestern corner, DTSC and Union Pacific considered three possible cleanup plans before selecting the more protective and effective proposal. The plan proposes to build a cap to cover the material instead of digging it up and disposing of it off site. To protect human health, the plan also will put in place a deed

restricting land use to industrial and commercial. Capping is now believed to be a better approach because of the following:

- Presence of a large amount of buried construction debris and clean soil (about 200,000 cubic yards), with a smaller amount of contaminated soil (about 54,000 cubic yards).
- Possible discovery of asbestos within the buried construction debris during digging.
- Revised future land use – Union Pacific wants to use the area for a public utility facility. The proposed cleanup will protect public utility workers from exposure to hazardous chemicals.

In the northwestern corner of the Lagoon Study Area, Union Pacific would clean up following this schedule:

Timeframe	Activity
Winter 2002/2003:	Approval of the Amendment
Spring-Fall 2003:	Design of the cap
Spring/Summer 2004:	Begin grading and capping the material

## How will cleanup work affect you?

All work will take place on weekdays between 7 am and 6 pm. During cleanup work, construction traffic will be heavier on Jibboom Street. Union Pacific will strictly control who enters the work areas. Watering trucks will wet the soil to keep down the dust. Railcars will transport contaminated soils to an authorized landfill.

## Can these cleanup actions have any effect on the environment?

Under the California Environmental Quality Act, DTSC must judge whether the proposed actions in the draft cleanup plans could or will hurt the environment. DTSC has reviewed the City of Sacramento’s Environmental Impact Reports for the redevelopment of the Rail Yard. The proposed actions are within the scope of the approved City of Sacramento redevelopment plan. The environmental impact reports prepared for the redevelopment plan adequately cover the proposed cleanup plans.

As a result, DTSC has proposed a Notice of Determination based on DTSC’s checklist of findings regarding the City of Sacramento’s environmental reports. To review a copy of the Notice of Determination, please visit the Sacramento Central Library or the DTSC file room at the addresses listed on the last page.

For the Asbestos Contingency Plan, DTSC believes that this plan is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act. Since the work planned will lessen the potential release of asbestos fibers, DTSC finds no negative environmental effect. You may review this Notice of Exemption. Both the Central Branch of the Sacramento Public Library and DTSC have all of these documents available for public review. Please see the locations shown on the last page.

### **For More Information**

If you have any questions, contact Fernando Amador, Project Manager, (916) 255-3737, or Nathan Schumacher, Public Participation Specialist, (916) 255-3650.

### **Information Repositories**

The full Administrative Record is available at the DTSC Sacramento Office File Room. The Draft Removal Action Workplan, the Asbestos Contingency Plan, the Draft Amendment to the 2000 Remedial Action Plan, the environmental review documents, and others are available for public review at the following locations:

**Sacramento Central Public Library**  
**828 I Street**  
**Sacramento, California**

For information, please call (916) 264-2700. The hours are Sundays 12 - 5 pm; Mondays and Fridays 10 am - 6 pm; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10 am - 9 pm; and Saturdays 10 am - 5 pm.

**DTSC**  
**Sacramento Office File Room**  
**8800 Cal Center Drive**  
**Sacramento, California**

For information, contact Alberta McMurray at (916) 255-3758.

### **Notice to Hearing-Impaired Individuals**

You can obtain additional information about the site by using the California State Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 (TDD). Ask them to contact Nathan Schumacher at (916) 255-3650.

### **Meeting Access**

Please call Nathan Schumacher, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (916) 255-3650 for information on public meeting place accessibility. If you need any reasonable accommodation to participate in the public meeting, please telephone Nathan Schumacher by March 3, 2003.

(Return address will be upside down for mailer ↓)

postage

Nathan Schumacher  
Department of Toxic Substances  
Control  
8800 Cal Center Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95826-3200

FACT SHEET

FEBRUARY 2003



**DTSC Invites Public Comment on Soil Cleanup Projects  
Former SPTCo Sacramento Rail Yard  
Sacramento, California**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 11, 2003  
Sacramento Amtrak Depot,  
401 I Street, Sacramento

**PUBLIC COMMENT  
PERIOD**

February 25 – March 27, 2003