

Comments below are compiled from SB 673 community workshops for information and discussion purposes. The comments do not represent the opinions of DTSC staff or commitments for specific regulatory actions. All comments are being considered in the SB 673 regulatory development process.

DTSC PUBLIC WORKSHOP
Lamont
Wednesday, October 24, 2018
David Head Center, 10300 San Diego St, Lamont

PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

OVERALL ISSUES

Issue 1. Relationships among state departments, local officials, and community residents

- There is lack of communication among the State, local officials, and residents.
- Many entities are missing from this conversation: DOGGR, Resources Agency, DPR.
- Why can't DTSC tell local governments of status of cleanups?
- The relationship between the county and the state need to be explained. The general understanding is that the counties get their authority from the State.
- A specific example of miscommunication: In Delano there is a plume that happened years ago and DTSC is cleaning it up. However, in the original contamination site, where there is a clean-up effort, the city, not knowing if it was cleaned up or not, gave a permit to a developer to set up a health clinic on that site.
- Local elected officials are unaware of what is impacting community.
- Residents are unable to go to County Supervisors meetings because the meetings are during day, when residents can't attend. This scheduling fosters a feeling that they are trying to "get away with something."

Issue 2. Regulations are complex and difficult for community to understand and weigh in on.

- Lack of clarity on how permits are enforced and how this effort (SB 673) will change things.
- The relationship between CUPAS and the State needs to be clarified.
- What's the status of language access policy? It is crucial to communicate in accessible language.

Issue 3. Lack of community knowledge regarding hazardous waste issues.

- Community members are unaware of existing problems related to hazardous waste and therefore are unable to engage in discussion regarding solutions.
- There is a lack of transparent communication with the affected communities.

Issue 4. Permit review timeline

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- There are concerns about the lag time between permit renewal decisions.
- The national standard period for permit renewals is more than five years; the goal of DTSC in California is a two-year period.
- Consider starting the renewal process early to address the long period for approval or facility closure.
- If a permit is expired, how can a facility still legally operate?

Issue 5. Cumulative Impacts go beyond the 81 permitted Toxic Waste Disposal Facilities

- Kern County is the 3rd largest producer of oil and gas. There is a need to regulate oil and gas permitting.
- Agricultural chemicals add to groundwater impacts.
- Compost facilities and dairies add to air quality burdens.
- L’Oreal and Amazon, Walmart distribution centers in Shafter increase traffic impacts.
- Post-Closure facilities have lasting impacts.
- Pesticides and trucks are perceived to have big impact on community.
- There are more problems than can be discussed.
- Funds to community are not helping affected residents.
- Why can’t DTSC address land use?

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Impact 1. Communities are disempowered because of lack of knowledge regarding the presence of hazardous waste facilities and their impacts on the communities.

- Most communities do not know about hazardous waste.
- It is unclear what impacts will be felt by the community with new industries (e.g., L’Oréal, Amazon) coming in.
- People are worried that facilities are not properly maintained. Past accidents and lack of transparency in past leads communities to be distrustful of DTSC and Hazardous Waste facilities.

Impact 2. Traffic, pollution, and road infrastructure degradation due to truck traffic.

- The trucks will be coming through 58 and 99.
- Unclear who is responsible for road maintenance and mitigation.
- Truck traffic is on local streets (Avenue 23).

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- Money and the fees collected go to the county and don't always make it to the affected local communities, especially when impacts are felt in unincorporated areas. There is a conflict of interest.
- There is a need for assurance that transportation systems are well maintained and adjusted to the safety of the community. This includes both roadways and vehicles.

Impact 3. Groundwater

- There are Arsenic, Nitrates, TCP 1, 2, and 3 in local water supplies.
- Public utility wells had to be shut down in Arvin.
- Had to shut down 3 wells in Delano.
- In Lamont, they had to use (groundwater) filters, increasing utilities cost, which impacts communities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Action 1. Increase monitoring and data Gathering

- Look at individual facility data in concert with other facilities in the area.
- Promote personal air monitoring.
- Monitoring data should be readily available to the public in a clear understandable way.
- Who owns the monitoring data? What is monitored? Who decides what is being monitored?
- Accurate monitoring of air, ground and water is critical. Data should be constantly assessed and used to improve safety and educate the community.
- Use citizen science and engage high school teachers for school science projects. Create grants or scholarships.

Action 2. Engage and educate the community

- Communities need to be informed about the existing problems so they can engage in finding solutions.
- Better promotions; through local newspaper, at local events (harvest festival, December parade), use social media to share and find local events, and use the school's digital board on the street.
- Find ways to make meetings interesting.
- Table discussions were helpful in getting community members to talk with each other and learn from each other to be able to respond to questions.
- Explain technology and how things work to the communities.
- Make the information intellectually accessible: use simpler language and pictures.

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- Share monitoring information at athletic events like soccer tournaments; monitor levels during the game and share results.
- Partner with local organizations: EJ groups, CRPE, Lamont Pride.
- Establish a true public engagement process.

Action 3. Engage the facilities

- Facilities staff need ongoing training to be educated about issues related to facilities and impacts to communities.
- Facilities could proactively engage with the communities in which they operate.
- Community members are not aware of the facilities within their own communities.
- Facilities develop Emission Reduction plans with the community.
- Remove small business exemptions.

Action 4. Improve the permit review and siting process

- Consider starting the permit renewal process early to address the long period for review and approval or facility closure.
- Fees collected through the permitting process should go to the impacted communities.
- Shorten the permit review period.
- Order permitted facilities seeking renewal to cease operations until DTSC finalizes and approves permits.
- Don't place/permit facilities in disadvantaged communities.

Action 5. Address truck traffic impacts

- Find alternative routes for trucks to avoid truck traffic through the communities.
- Establish a buffer zone between facilities and communities.
- Reduce pollution impacts to communities