



Jared Blumenfeld
Secretary for
Environmental Protection



Department of Toxic Substances Control

Meredith Williams, Ph.D.
Acting Director
5796 Corporate Avenue
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Gavin Newsom
Governor

July 12, 2019

DTSC Statement Regarding Progress Made in Implementing Health and Safety Enhancements at Ascon Landfill

On July 9, 2019, representatives of the Responsible Parties cleaning up the Ascon Landfill site in Huntington Beach briefed officials on the implementation of health and safety enhancements at the site. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) suspended cleanup activities at the site after community members lodged hundreds of odor complaints. Work will resume once the Responsible Parties implement the health and safety enhancements required by DTSC. (DTSC's letter describing the enhancements is attached.)

Officials in attendance included Huntington Beach Mayor Erik Peterson, other city officials, Assemblymember Cottie Petri-Norris' staff members, Huntington Beach City School District and Huntington Beach Union High School District administrators, DTSC and South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

The representatives described enhancements they have completed, and enhancements in the process of being implemented or designed. They are already using more effective odor suppressants on contaminated, bare soil. They and AQMD staff have sampled on-site concrete rubble for asbestos and found none. They have increased the on-site monitoring frequency to 24 hours a day, seven days a week for chemicals that might travel through the air in dust or vapor.

The representatives have also committed to expand their air monitoring network to include mobile stations at Edison High School, Eader Elementary School, Edison Community Park and on two residential streets by September 30, 2019.

Ongoing air monitoring at the site has not found any chemicals above levels that present a public health concern. The health protective monitoring levels are set to protect members of the community, including children and other vulnerable people.

The representatives will meet with DTSC, AQMD and other oversight agencies on July 16, 2019, to discuss their proposed actions to implement other enhancements. DTSC

and other officials asked the representatives to provide timelines for implementing required enhancements.

At the request of officials for the city of Huntington Beach, members of the government organizations at the briefing agreed to participate in two teams. One team will focus on coordinating government agencies to facilitate implementation of health and safety enhancements. The other team will help the representatives provide community information on the actions the representatives are taking to implement the enhancements.

For additional information: Members of the community may contact DTSC Public Participation Specialist Stacey Lear at (714) 484-5354 or Stacey.Lear@dtsc.ca.gov.

The mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated properties, enforcing hazardous waste law, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.



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June 12, 2019

Ms. Tamara Zeier, P.E.
Project Navigator, Ltd.
One Pointe Drive, Suite 320
Brea, California 92821

SUSPENSION OF REMEDY IMPLEMENTATION AND REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL MEASURES, ASCON LANDFILL SITE, 21641 MAGNOLIA STREET, HUNTINGTON BEACH (SITE CODE: 400007)

Dear Ms. Zeier:

At a June 6, 2019 public meeting, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced its decision to suspend the Ascon Landfill Site (Site) cleanup until enhanced safeguards are implemented. These safeguards include Project Navigator Ltd. implementing measures to address odors emanating from the Site into Edison High School, across the street from the Site, and into the nearby community. DTSC takes concerns voiced by people in the community seriously and responds as necessary to ensure the protection of public health and the environment. Consequently, additional public health and safety enhancements presented at the public meeting (Attached), must be implemented prior to resumption of onsite activities.

After the public meeting, DTSC communicated with Project Navigator, Ltd., to notify them of its decision and discussed necessary site control measures on June 7, 2019. DTSC based its decision to suspend the work until additional public health and safety enhancements are implemented on three factors. First, people in the community, including officials from the school district and the City of Huntington Beach, have lodged hundreds of complaints about the site. Community members also voiced their strenuous concerns also for hours in the June 6th public meeting that you attended. Community members also voiced similar concerns at a May 15th community meeting held in Huntington Beach's City Hall.

Ms. Tamara Zeier, P.E.
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Second, on May 2, 2019, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) issued Project Navigator Ltd. a Notice of Violation due to reported and confirmed nuisance odors. Third, for the same reasons, SCAQMD also issued Project Navigator Ltd. an order to stop work for the day on June 6, 2019.

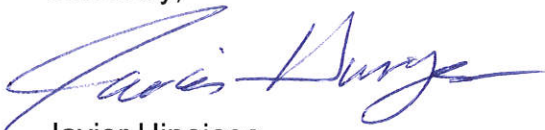
We note that monitoring has not found any chemicals in the air above a level that causes a public health concern. We also note that monitoring and dust and odor suppression activities has continued even after we suspended cleanup work. However, Project Navigator must address community complaints' over odors and dust.

As indicated in the attached fact sheet from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), symptoms to odors vary based on people's sensitivity and young children, the elderly and pregnant women may be more sensitive to odors. Additionally, ATSDR recognizes that odors can cause symptoms and illnesses similar to those expressed by community members during the public meeting and complaints to our office. Therefore, Project Navigator, Ltd. must implement more effective mitigation measures to control odors from the Site.

Upon receipt of this letter, please contact DTSC to arrange for a meeting the week of June 17, 2019 to discuss the scope, schedule and design of mitigation measures included in the attached list.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Xihong Scarlett Zhai, Project Manager, at (714) 484-5316 or by e-mail at Xihong.Zhai@dtsc.ca.gov, or contact me at (714) 484-5484 or by e-mail at Javier.Hinojosa@dtsc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Javier Hinojosa", is written over a horizontal line.

Javier Hinojosa
Branch Chief
Brownfields Restoration and School Evaluation Branch
Site Mitigation and Restoration Program

mv/xsz/jh

Attachments

cc: See next page

cc: (via e-mail)

Honorable Assembly Member Petrie-Norris
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Mr. Erik Peterson
Honorable Mayor of Huntington Beach
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Mr. Clint Harwick
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Mr. Owen Crosby
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Dr. Donald Greenlee
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Brownfields Restoration and School Evaluation Team Reading File – Cypress

ASCON SITE HEALTH & SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS
June 12, 2019

On June 6, 2019, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) suspended cleanup work at the Ascon Landfill site in Huntington Beach, California.

DTSC is suspending all work until the following public health and safety enhancements occur:

1. DTSC approves the evaluation and use of a feasible tenting or enclosure system to control odors where excavation of contaminated soil occurs.
2. A 16-foot high fence is constructed at the site.
3. DTSC approves actions to ensure that contaminated soil is covered or solidified daily.
4. DTSC approves an air monitoring program that includes additional heavy metals known to occur at the site.
5. DTSC approves expanding the range of off-site air monitoring activities, including all nearby schools.
6. DTSC approves a system to rapidly respond to odor and dust complaints by investigating and then shutting down and correcting work practices that generate odor or dust. The system must also provide timely reports on follow-up work to the individuals who reported the odor or dust complaint.
7. A technical advisor is hired to advise the community, enhance their technical resources and to help improve DTSC's communications with the public.
8. DTSC approves a review of the project's air monitoring data validation methodologies used to ensure the quality of monitoring results.
9. DTSC approves the testing of on-site concrete material for asbestos and, if testing identifies any threats, DTSC will immediately require actions to address the threat.
10. DTSC holds a public meeting before cleanup work is re-started.

Environmental Odors

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What are environmental odors?

Many substances in the environment can produce odors. You typically smell these odors when you are outdoors and sometimes when you are indoors with your windows open. You may smell and react to certain chemicals in the air before they are at harmful levels. Those odors can become a nuisance and bother people, causing temporary symptoms such as headache and nausea. Other odors can be toxic and cause harmful health effects.

Where do environmental odors come from?

Environmental odors can come from many sources:

- **Animals:** Confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs)
- **Human activities:** Compost, sewage, garbage, fires, household cleaning agents
- **Industry:** Oil refineries, landfills, paper mills, wastewater treatment plants
- **Nature:** Moist soil, gardens, fires
- **Vehicles:** Diesel exhaust



Can environmental odors make me sick?

Everyone reacts to odors differently. Some people are more sensitive to environmental odors than others. When you are more sensitive to an odor, you may have symptoms even at a low concentration of the odor in air. In general, as concentration levels increase, more people will have symptoms.

What symptoms can I expect?

Symptoms vary based on your sensitivity to the odor. In most cases, symptoms will depend on the type of substance, its concentration in air, how often exposure occurs (frequency), how long exposure lasts (duration), your age, and your state of health.

Young children, the elderly, and pregnant women may be more sensitive to odors. In general, the most common symptoms are

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Headaches | • Shortness of breath |
| • Nasal congestion | • Wheezing |
| • Eye, nose, and throat irritation | • Heart Palpitations |
| • Hoarseness, sore throat | • Nausea |
| • Cough | • Drowsiness |
| • Chest tightness | • Mental depression |



These symptoms generally occur at the time of exposure. Their intensity will depend on the concentration of the odor in air, how often you smell it, and how long exposure lasts.

- If the concentration of an odor in air is **below levels of irritation** (levels known to cause eye, nose, or throat irritation in people), the symptoms will pass when you move out of the exposure area.
- If the concentration of an odor in air is **at or above levels of irritation** and the exposure duration is longer, the symptoms may last after moving out of the exposure area.

Are all environmental odors toxic?

No. Toxicity is the degree to which a substance (a toxin) can harm humans or animals. The following factors affect toxicity.

Are Environmental Odors Toxic Factsheet  [PDF – 2MB]

- Toxicity depends on the amount of a substance (concentration) in the air you breathe, how often (frequency) you breathe that air, and how much time (duration) you spend breathing that air.
- If a substance level in air is high, happens often, and last a long time, the odor can become toxic and cause adverse health effects.
- If those conditions do not exist, odors are generally not toxic.
- If you are sensitive to environmental odors, you may react to low concentrations of a substance in air. The length of exposure is important whether you are sensitive or not.


ATSDR Toxic Substances Portal



For more information on toxic substances, visit ATSDR's [Toxic Substances Portal](#).

How do I know what substance I am smelling?

Visit the "[What is that odor?](#)" section of this website. There you can describe an odor and find the substance(s) that produce that odor. You can also look up a specific substance and find a description of its odor.

To find chemicals released in your area, you can search EPA's [Toxic Release Inventory \(TRI\)](#) .


Are environmental odors regulated in the United States?

In general, no. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates pollutants in outdoor air through the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The NAAQS regulates

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Carbon monoxide (CO) | • Ozone (O ₃) |
| • Lead (Pb) | • Particulate Matter (PM) and |
| • Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) | • Sulfur dioxide (SO ₂). |



Sulfur dioxide is the only regulated air pollutant with a strong, pungent odor.

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA must control 187 hazardous air pollutants, also known as toxic air pollutants or air toxics. EPA controls those chemicals for their toxicity, not for their odor. EPA requires them to be controlled at the source that generates the emissions. See the EPA website for more information: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/pollsour.html> .

Although environmental odors are not nationally regulated in the United States, many cities and local governments have established nuisance odor regulations. You can find more information by contacting your city or county health department or your state environmental department.

Can I petition ATSDR to ask for an evaluation of environmental odors in my neighborhood?

- How community members and government agencies can petition ATSDR
- ATSDR mandates

If ATSDR is working in your neighborhood to assess environmental exposures, the agency can help by doing one or more of the following:

- ## What can my community do about environmental odors?

- [illegible]

I have asthma. Can environmental odors make my asthma worse?



I have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or emphysema. Can environmental odors make my COPD or emphysema worse?

In many cases, yes, odors can make COPD or emphysema worse. Using your inhalers, staying indoors, or leaving the area for a few hours can help.

I am pregnant. Can environmental odors affect the baby I am carrying?

In general, the effect on an unborn baby depends on the amount of substance (concentration) in the air that you are breathing, how often (frequency) you are breathing that air, how much time (duration) you spend breathing that air, and the stage in your pregnancy (the baby is more vulnerable during the first trimester).

Staying indoors during bad odor days or leaving the area for a few hours can help.



Are children more sensitive to the effects of environmental odors?

They may be. Young children have a faster breathing rate than adults, so they breathe in more of the odors.

Some chemicals producing the environmental odors can be heavier than air and stay closer to the ground where children play. Because children are small and play or crawl on the ground, they can have higher exposure to these odors-producing chemicals.

Are elderly people more sensitive to the effects of environmental odors?

They may be. The sense of smell decreases with age. Sometimes elderly people may not be able to smell environmental odors, so they continue to stay in an affected area. Symptoms will depend on their health status, amount of substance (concentration) in the air that they are breathing, how often (frequency) they are breathing that air, and how much time (duration) they spend breathing that air.



I walk/jog for exercise in my neighborhood. Am I at risk for developing environmental odor symptoms?

In general, developing odor symptoms depends on the amount of a substance (concentration) in the air that you are breathing, how often (frequency) you are breathing that air, and how much time (duration) you spend breathing that air. However, if you are sensitive to environmental odors, any level of odor may make you feel sick. Jogging and other forms of exercise increase your breathing rate, making you breathe in more of the odor. During bad odor days, exercising indoors or in another location can help.

