



PROPOSED PROJECT: TRUCKING IS MOST VIABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTION FOR SSFL SOILS

Santa Susana Field Laboratory Program Environmental Impact Report

SSFL is a roughly 2,850-acre site in Simi Valley where rocket engine testing and nuclear research took place. DTSC is the lead regulatory agency overseeing the SSFL cleanup along with multiple state, federal and local government agencies. DTSC has prepared a Final Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for SSFL under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The PEIR describes and evaluates the possible environmental impacts from cleanup work onsite and identifies alternatives to avoid or reduce them. The first cleanup plans (decisions documents) are scheduled for release in late 2023 for public comment and implementation is anticipated to begin in 2025.

The proposed 15-year project includes removal of an estimated 2.5 million cubic yards of contaminated soils, radiologic wastes, and building demolition debris from SSFL. The soil removal process involves excavating contaminated soils, loading the soils onto trucks, and driving the covered trucks via Woolsey Canyon Road to appropriate off-site landfills. Clean backfill soil will also be transported using trucks on Woolsey Canyon Road. Trucks will be controlled by a DTSC-approved comprehensive Traffic Management Plan including established routes, hours of operation, traffic control measures, and a limit of 96 round trips daily. The Traffic Management Plan will require repair and restoration of all public roads.

The PEIR analyzed the impacts of alternative transportation route/method combinations to move soils from SSFL to Simi Valley. One alternative (4a) would move soils using an overland pipe conveyor along Edison Road to Simi Valley, then load the soils on trucks destined to landfills. Another alternative (4b) would use an overland pipe conveyor to move contaminated soils along North American Cutoff Road to reach a Simi Valley MetroRail rail spur where the soils would be transferred onto rail cars. Both pipe conveyor options would need to be about 2 to 4 miles long depending on exact routing. Several types of conveyors are shown in the photos.

Trucking benefits:

- Uses existing transportation infrastructure
- Dig/load and haul/dump on day 1
- Soil is handled efficiently only once between SSFL and recipient landfill
- Site-Wide Traffic Management Plan

Mitigation Measures

- Flagged trucks, limited hours & trucks
- Traffic Management Plan
- Flagged/covered trucks with limited hours

For more information and to view the final PEIR: dtsc.ca.gov/santa_susana_field_lab or contact:

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Overland Conveyors:

Examples of overland conveyors are open belt, cart, or pipe conveyors. The pipe conveyor belt rolls itself up into a rubber tube during transport of soils, making it the only overland conveyor type that would provide containment for the contaminated soils. The pipe conveyor would also allow mild direction changes. Of the overland conveyor types, the pipe conveyor would be the most applicable for the SSFL project.



Belt conveyor (on grade)



Cart conveyor (on grade)



Pipe conveyor (on/above grade)

Aerial (Cable) Conveyors:

Another type of conveyor considered in the PEIR is the aerial or cable type, consisting mainly of cable gondolas and aerial ropeway belts. Unfortunately, aerial conveyors can only travel in straight lines. Further, they do not typically have enclosures for the contaminated soils, leading to wind-borne dust. These negative attributes make aerial conveyors ill-suited for SSFL.



Gondola



Ropeway

Conveyor Implementation Concerns:

Conveyor options have more adverse impacts than trucking on air quality, biological and cultural resources, geology, soils, hydrology and water, land use, costs, aesthetics, and health risks. All conveyor types would require extensive steel support structures whose installation, maintenance, and removal would result in significant environmental impacts. Using conveyors would require multiple soil loading and unloading steps and facilities, increasing complexity and risk of releases. The most significant obstacle for any conveyor system at SSFL is the need to cross 20 to 130 private properties (depending on the routing), requiring liability waivers, insurance, and legal access via property purchases, rights-of-way, rezoning, and/or eminent domain. Constructing an entirely new conveyor soil transportation infrastructure would cost \$100s of millions more than using trucks on the existing roads, and the various legal and permitting activities would likely take 7 to 10 years. By then, about half of the excavated soil would have been trucked offsite for disposal and half the project would have been completed. The PEIR analysis concludes that the Woolsey Canyon Road truck route remains the most feasible transportation option.