



Department of Toxic Substances Control



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December 17, 2009

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CALTRANS MODESTO SOIL STOCKPILES (STATE ROUTE 132/99 INTERCHANGE PROJECT), MODESTO, STANISLAUS COUNTY

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Beginning in January 2005 the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), via Interagency Agreements and Task Orders with Caltrans, reviewed reports related to the characterization of soil stockpiles on Caltrans "right-of-way" property in the vicinity of Kansas Avenue and State Route 99 in Modesto, Stanislaus County. The soil stockpiles (Site) consist of three separate piles totaling approximately 120,000 cubic yards on Caltrans property located south of Kansas Avenue, just east and west of North Emerald Avenue and State Route 99. The Site is fenced and posted as "State Property - No Dumping - No Parking - No Trespassing". The area is zoned as "Agricultural".

Background

The stockpiles consist of excess native soils and pond tailings that were generated when Caltrans constructed a segment of State Route 99 north of Kansas Avenue in the 1960's. Excavating the segment traversed a portion of a 4.3-acre parcel purchased from FMC Inc. The parcel was previously occupied by a corner of FMC's southernmost percolation pond. FMC Inc. (and its predecessors) was a chemical manufacturing company that processed barium sulfate and strontium sulfate ores and other minerals. Chemicals associated with the processing include, barium, strontium, arsenic, sulfide, sulfate, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons. The former FMC Inc. facility is located just north of State Route 99 and Kansas Avenue, less than one-quarter of a mile from the stockpile site.

Caltrans and the Stanislaus Council of Governments is planning the construction of the State Route 132 West Expressway/State Route 99 interchange at the location of

the soil stockpiles. The project is being designed to use the stockpile soils to construct the core of the abutments and elevated sections of the interchange. Because soil from the FMC evaporation ponds was dispersed throughout the stockpiles, Caltrans characterized the stockpile soil, assessed groundwater quality, and sampled surface water runoff in order to conduct a human health risk assessment to evaluate potential health risks to nearby residents, trespassers, and future construction workers.

Documents Reviewed

In accordance with the Interagency Agreements and Tasks Orders, DTSC reviewed the following reports:

1. "Heavy metal Contamination, Preliminary Site Investigation Report, State Route 132 at State Route 99, Stanislaus County, California", June 1, 2004.
2. "Remedial Action Options Report, SR 132/99 Stockpiles, Modesto California", July 27, 2004.
3. "Surface Water Sampling Report, State Route 99/132 Project," June 9, 2006.
4. "Human Health Risk Assessment, Caltrans Modesto Soil Stockpiles, Stanislaus County, California", dated May 14, 2007.
5. "Site Investigation Report for the Characterization of Soil Stockpiles", May 14, 2007.
6. "Site Investigation Report, Groundwater Assessment," May 14, 2007.
7. "Particulate Matter Test Report, Mowing Simulation", June 5, 2007.

Collectively, the above reports are intended to provide information equivalent to a Preliminary Endangerment Assessment (PEA). A PEA is the initial step for determining whether there is a potential for a release of hazardous substances that presents risk to human health or the environment. In consultation with the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (RWQCB), DTSC reviewed and provided comments to Caltrans on the above reports in DTSC correspondence dated April 8, 2005, July 21, 2005, January 10, 2006, February 8, 2006, and August 20, 2007. On September 28, 2009, Caltrans transmitted "Response to Comments" and a "Final Preliminary Endangerment Assessment, Caltrans Modesto Soil Stockpiles, State Route 132/99 Interchange, Stanislaus County dated June 30, 2009 to DTSC.

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Findings

DTSC finds that the soil stockpiles, as currently managed by Caltrans on Caltrans property, do not pose a risk to human health for: 1) Caltrans workers who access the fenced site to conduct mowing operations, conduct fence repairs, or other routine activities; 2) trespassers; and 3) residents adjacent to the stockpiles. Until such time that the State Route 132/99 Interchange project is constructed and/or the final disposition of the soil stockpiles is determined, Caltrans should continue to manage the soil stockpiles by: 1) limiting access to Caltrans authorized personnel; 2) inspecting and maintaining the chain-link fence; 3) prohibiting any activities involving excavation/grading, off-site removal of soil, or placement of other soil on the Site; and 4) maintaining the current grade and vegetative cover. Caltrans should also maintain the existing groundwater monitoring system associated with the Site.

Future Actions

Prior to the design and construction of the State Route 132/99 Interchange project, Caltrans and the Stanislaus Council of Governments will need to consult with DTSC and RWQCB to address the use of the soil stockpile material in the interchange project and/or its final disposition as it relates to human health and water quality. Soil stockpile material used in ramps and roadways will need to be managed in a manner that is protective of human health and water quality. These activities will require concurrence from DTSC and RWQCB (e.g., approval of Removal Action Workplan or Remedial Action Plan depending on the costs).

If you have any questions, please contact me at 916-255-3591.

Sincerely,



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