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Brownley Lauds State Officials for New Agreement Insuring High Level of Cleanup of Santa Susana Field Laboratory Contamination

For decades, the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, former Rocketdyne engine testing site in the Chatsworth hills has been spewing toxic and radioactive waste into the air, the soil and down into the groundwater, causing extensive contamination both on- and off-site. The site is now owned by the Boeing Company. State Senator Sheila Kuehl carried bill after bill to get this site cleaned up. All failed until last October, when Governor Schwarzenegger signed her bill SB 990, but only with the caveat that some further negotiations would be needed on the exact cleanup standards. Today, those uncertainties were settled by the release of a signed Letter of Intent between the State of California and key community members and environmental and health groups. SB 990 will remain the law and sets forth the very strict cleanup standards.

“I am extraordinarily grateful to a great many people who got us to this place,” said Assemblymember Julia Brownley. “We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to CalEPA Secretary Linda Adams who personally met with the activists over the past several weeks and heard them and then took action to confirm the SB 990 standards. Thanks also to Governor Schwarzenegger for his great leadership.

“Resources Secretary Michael Chrisman was also an essential party to this deal, with tremendous help from the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Dan Hirsch, nuclear activist from the Committee to Bridge the Gap, was the community’s voice and champion in insuring that the best possible science determined the standards. And it couldn’t have happened without the bipartisan vote that passed SB 990. I am very grateful to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their help.

“Lastly, my heartfelt thanks to my colleague, Sheila Kuehl for her years of work. She never gave up. Anyone who knows her knew that she never would. And because of her determination that the public health must be protected, in spite of legislative defeat after defeat at the hands of Rocketdyne and Boeing as they fought every step along the way, cleanup of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site will be governed by the strictest possible legal standards. This is an amazing day.”

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