

From: **Burden, Bernadette (CDC/OD/OADC)** <***@cdc.gov>
Date: Thu, Sep 24, 2015 at 6:21 AM
Subject: Your request for information regarding ATSDR
To:

Hi Michael,

Your request for information regarding the Santa Susana Laboratory in southern California was sent on to me for review. I've shared this with the staff and I wanted to get back to you, with our responses:

Q1. Were you aware of ATSDR's plan to reevaluate health studies at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL)?

A1. ATSDR has not agreed to and does not plan to reevaluate health studies already conducted at the SSFL. In response to a petition for a health assessment, ATSDR identified the following three activities to address the concerns raised in the petition:

1. Determine whether currently there are any completed pathways of human exposure to SSFL-related contaminants and what public health concerns may be associated with those exposures.
2. Evaluate whether the proposed remedial options would be protective of human health.
3. Provide the SSFL community with public friendly information and presentations of ATSDR's findings and the strengths and weaknesses of SSFL-related epidemiological studies.

We are concerned that there is a misunderstanding of what these proposed activities will accomplish. Therefore, we are providing some additional information and clarification of the proposed activities:

1. ATSDR will only be conducting an evaluation of current exposures posed to people living near the SSFL Site. ATSDR will not be evaluating the hazards posed from past exposures at the site or exposures posed to people within the site boundary. Therefore, the findings of this evaluation will have no implications for the proposed plan for cleaning up the SSFL site; this clean up should move forward. We will specifically be looking to see if there are any current exposures to contaminants that may have migrated off the site (for example, sediments in drainage areas and windblown dust). We will identify if those exposures could pose a risk to health, and if so, will identify additional steps that can be taken to protect health.
2. ATSDR will provide technical support to California Dept. of Toxic Substances and Control (DTSC) as they oversee the clean-up plans for the SSFL. We are aware of community concerns regarding exposures to dust that might be generated during the remediation activities. We will follow-up to see how our expertise can help ensure that human health risks are minimized during the remediation process.

3. ATSDR will not be reanalyzing the epidemiological studies conducted by the independent contractors. ATSDR has heard that members of the community were not provided with understandable, clear information about the findings of these reports. We would like to bring together the authors of the many studies who have conducted work at the SSFL to discuss their findings with the community members.

ATSDR has not initiated any of these proposed activities. Additional information is being gathered to ensure any action will be appropriate and effective. ATSDR will finalize and implement action plans after it has gathered the necessary information.

Q2. Did you approve of this plan?

A2. All petitions received by ATSDR are evaluated for their relevance to ATSDR's mission, the availability of data and information to conduct an evaluation, and whether an evaluation will provide a meaningful response to the question. We decided to accept the petition for the SSFL site since these criteria were met.

Q2a. If you did approve of this plan, on what legal basis did you make that determination?

A2a. Congress established ATSDR in 1980 under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as the Superfund law. This law set up a fund to identify and clean up our country's hazardous waste sites. Under the Superfund law, ATSDR is charged with assessing the presence and nature of health hazards to communities living near Superfund sites, helping prevent or reduce harmful exposures, and expanding the knowledge base about the health effects that result from exposure to hazardous substances.

In 1984, amendments to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA), which provides for the management of hazardous waste storage, treatment, and disposal facilities, authorized ATSDR to conduct public health assessments at these sites when requested by EPA, states, tribes, or individuals. The passage of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) broadened ATSDR's responsibilities in the areas of public health assessments, establishment and maintenance of toxicologic databases, information dissemination, and medical education. ATSDR also conducts public health assessments when petitioned by concerned community members, physicians, state or federal agencies, or tribal governments.

Q3. If you did approve this plan but now it has been put on hold; why was it put on hold?

A3. As a normal function of the public health assessment process, ATSDR engages with the community to help the agency decide how best to address the public health concerns of the community. We are only now beginning the process of engaging the community. Once the information has been gathered from the community, ATSDR will finalize and initiate its plan of

action.

As the new director of ATSDR, I would like to meet with County Officials, their subject matter experts, and other community stakeholders to review our plans to date and to determine whether they are in conflict with state, county and local efforts.

Q4. Has this plan been permanently shelved?

A4. No. Please see previous answer.

Let me know if you have any additional questions,

Bernadette Burden
Senior Press Officer
News Media Branch
Division of Public Affairs
CDC/ATSDR
(404)***_****