



Media Release

LA Water Board approves MOU that holds Boeing accountable for Santa Susana cleanup

Memorandum provides safeguards for communities and environment

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LOS ANGELES – In a crucial development regarding the proposed cleanup of contaminated soil at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory in southeastern Ventura County, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board today approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that requires The Boeing Company – after soil cleanup is complete - to prove that stormwater runoff is no longer polluted and human health and the environment are protected.

The MOU is part of a [comprehensive framework](#) that involves both the Los Angeles Water Board and Department of Toxic Substances Control, two agencies within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). The framework imposes strict protocols and timelines for Boeing’s cleanup and is made up of two principal agreements – the MOU and a DTSC Settlement Agreement that was enacted with the MOU’s passage.

“The MOU requires that, unless and until the soil cleanup is good enough to prevent pollution of stormwater by past industrial activities, Boeing will remain subject to the regional board’s regulatory oversight under its existing NPDES permit, which has provided stringent pollutant limits for stormwater discharges from the site since 1998,” said James Stahl, acting chair of the Los Angeles Water Board. “Further, the MOU does not pre-determine any future decisions by the board, which will seek public input on upcoming permitting decisions.”

The preconditions set forth in the MOU exceed those generally required to terminate industrial stormwater permits. Boeing agreed not to challenge these additional requirements in the future.

The MOU establishes processes and methodologies to assess the effectiveness of Boeing’s soil cleanup on stormwater quality and ensure contaminants in the soil from past industrial activity have been adequately remediated so that surface water runoff from the site is safe. These conditions must be met before the regional board can consider relieving Boeing of its stormwater runoff permit obligations.



Additionally, the MOU sets forth that the U.S. Department of Energy and NASA, which are also obligated to perform cleanup at the site, must obtain permits for their stormwater runoff so there is no gap in regulation of stormwater discharges before the federal entities finish their respective cleanups.

In key features of the [DTSC Settlement Agreement](#), Boeing agrees to the following:

- Not to litigate a stringent risk-based cleanup standard selected by DTSC, up to and including a “resident with garden” standard for chemical contamination. This standard requires that the cleaned areas are of a standard safe for people to live onsite and eat homegrown produce from a backyard garden.
- The cleanup of radiological contamination to “background” levels that would exist locally without industrial activity.
- An expedited process to streamline and accelerate cleanup of contaminated sites.

The former field laboratory sits on a plateau and spans 2,850 acres, 30 miles from downtown Los Angeles. From 1947 to 2006, Boeing and its predecessors, along with NASA and the Department of Energy, conducted research, development, assembly and testing of rocket engines, small-scale nuclear reactors and chemical lasers. Though all industrial activity at the site ended in 2006, radionuclides and other contaminants remain.

For years, cleanup at the field laboratory has been stalled due to litigation and disputes over cleanup standards. Together with the DTSC Settlement Agreement, the MOU ensures that the cleanup will move forward as soon as possible and in a manner that will protect human health, groundwater, surface water and the environment.

With 10 million residents, Los Angeles is the most densely populated region in the state. It encompasses all the coastal watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, along with portions of Kern and Santa Barbara Counties. Land use varies considerably. In Ventura County, agriculture and open space exist alongside urban, residential and commercial areas. In northern Los Angeles County, residential communities are rapidly expanding while land use in the southern parts of the county include urban, residential, commercial and industrial.