

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: April 9, 2007
POSITION: Neutral, note concerns

BILL NUMBER: SB 990
AUTHOR: S. Kuehl

BILL SUMMARY: Hazardous Waste: Santa Susana Field Laboratory

Existing law charges the Director of Toxic Substances Control with oversight over hazardous waste control in the state. This bill would authorize the Department of Toxic Substances Control (Toxics) to compel a responsible party to take or pay for remedial action at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL). The bill would prohibit the sale, lease, or transfer of any land presently or formerly occupied by the SSFL unless the Director of Toxics Substances Control certifies that the land has undergone complete remediation.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Toxics indicates that existing law allows it to recover reasonable remediation costs via reimbursements from a responsible party, and therefore the bill would have no fiscal impact on the Department. Toxics also states that it currently has a cost reimbursement agreement with Boeing, the current owner of the property, and that this bill would merely shift existing reimbursement authority from the Hazardous Waste Control Account to the Toxic Substances Control Account.

COMMENTS

Finance is neutral on this bill.

Proponents of the bill state that the SSFL site has been marred by inconsistent cleanup standards and contradictory regulatory responsibilities as chemical cleanup is being regulated by Toxics and radioactive cleanup is overseen by the federal Department of Energy (DOE). This bill would authorize Toxics to compel a responsible party to take or pay for appropriate remediation actions at the SSFL site in Ventura County. The bill would also prohibit the sale, lease, or transfer of the site unless Toxics certifies that it has undergone complete remediation pursuant to the most conservative safety standards.

The SSFL site consists of 2850 acres near Los Angeles. It was used by the federal government in the late 1940's to develop and test nuclear reactors and weapons. Numerous spills and accidental releases (including a partial meltdown of a nuclear power reactor, illegal burning of toxic substances, and the use of toxic solvents for washing rocket test stands) resulted in serious radioactive and chemical contamination of surface water, ground water, and soil.

Today, all nuclear research and most rocket testing have stopped. While the site is now under the ownership of the Boeing Company, both DOE and NASA are leasing small portions of the property. Additionally, rapid population growth in Southern California has resulted in residential encroachment near the site (more than half a million people now live within a 10 mile radius). Close proximity to the site results in exposure to unsafe levels of toxic and radioactive residues and presents serious public health issues. Several studies have linked the increased incidence of cancer to exposure to chemicals or radiation among nearby residents and workers at SSFL.

(Continued)

Analyst/Principal Date Program Budget Manager Date
(0690) Karen Finn

Department Deputy Director Date

Governor's Office: By: Date: Position Approved
Position Disapproved

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COMMENTS (Continued)

While the Department of Energy has agreed to clean up all DOE sites to meet federal Superfund requirements in 1995, it recently stated that its responsibility for the SSFL site cleanup (pursuant to federal Superfund standards) is limited to only a small area and that it intends to release the remaining land for residential use. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency responded that the site had not been adequately characterized regarding its degree of contamination, and indicated that its use should be limited to daily hikes only. Boeing does not support this bill stating it would unfairly single out a large area of the property by creating unrealistic cleanup standards.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO LA CO RV	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							Fund Code
		PROP	2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		
		98	FC	FC	FC	FC			
3960/ToxicSubCtrl	SO	No		--		--		--	0557

<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>
0557	Toxic Substances Control Account