



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Environmental Investigation at the former Athens Tank Farm (Ujima Village and Earvin Magic Johnson Regional Park) Willowbrook, California November, 2011

What should I know about this site?

ExxonMobil Oil Company operated an oil storage facility from the mid-1920s to the mid-1960s at the site. In the 1970s it was converted into a regional park and public housing. The purpose of the environmental investigation has been to assess whether a potential human health or environmental risk is associated with the groundwater and/or soil on or beneath the site. This is accomplished through an evaluation of soil, soil vapor, air, and groundwater at the site and in the surrounding area, for presence of petroleum products and other contaminants and to assess whether a potential human health or environmental risk is associated with the groundwater and/or soil on or beneath the site.

Who is Ordering the environmental investigation?

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) has ordered responsible parties to investigate and cleanup the former Athens Tank Farm. The Regional Board is responsible for reviewing, approving, and monitoring the investigation and cleanup of the site. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) provides assistance in the oversight with particular emphasis on the assessment of the potential health risk associated with the contamination. The Regional Board and DTSC are both part of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Who is conducting the cleanup activities?

ExxonMobil and the County of Los Angeles have been ordered by the Regional Board to conduct the investigation and cleanup.

What's been found so far?

Air: Indoor air and outdoor air data collected to date at the site are consistent with air quality throughout the Los Angeles area, indicating that subsurface soil vapor contamination does not adversely affected the air quality at the site. Indoor air tests indicate that health hazards are within regulatory acceptable levels and there are no immediate threats to human health.

Soil: Subsurface soils on the site are impacted with low levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), benzene, naphthalene, ethylbenzene, and lead. Overall, the concentrations detected in shallow soil are low and do not pose a risk from direct contact by current site users.

Higher levels of these chemicals have been found in deeper soils at some locations and are unlikely to be contacted by site visitors and workers.

Soil Vapor: Elevated levels of several volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and methane are present in subsurface soil vapor on portions of the site. Some of these compounds do exceed the California Human Health Screening Levels (CHHSLs) set by the California Environmental Protection Agency

Exceeding these levels does not automatically mean there is a health risk or that people have been exposed to these compounds. *But it does mean that additional investigation and evaluation work will be done to determine if there is any health risk and ensure protection of human health and the environment.* This additional work will involve testing outdoor air.

Groundwater: Petroleum products detected in groundwater beneath the site are located at an average depth of 42 feet beneath the surface of the ground. Due to its depth, the groundwater is unlikely to come into contact with people and is not used for drinking water.

Wasn't Ujima Village closed because of this environmental investigation?

No. The residents were relocated because of the materials used to build the complex, not health risks from contamination of the Former Athens Tank Farm operations. There is no evidence to date of an immediate public health concern related to soil and groundwater conditions at the site. An evaluation of shallow soil and indoor and outdoor air quality samples of the Ujima properties determined that the total cancer risk and noncancer hazard for exposure to contaminants in shallow soils were within California and US EPA acceptable limits.

What about Honey's Little Angels Day Care?

Although there is no evidence of an immediate health concern, given the planned demolition of Ujima Village (expected mid-2012), the Regional Board, the County of Los Angeles, and ExxonMobil are working together to assist in the relocation of Honey's Little Angel's Daycare as soon as possible.

Is drinking water affected?

No. Drinking water for the area is provided by the Metropolitan Water District and the Golden State Water Company. It comes from sources (Colorado River and Central Groundwater Basin) outside the community and it is tested to confirm that it meets government drinking water standards before it is provided to consumers.

Is it OK to use the Park?

Yes. At this time, shallow soil and outdoor air data collected to date indicates that there is no health risk to Park users or employees. The Park remains open to the public.

Why are there signs saying not to eat the fish in the Park's lakes?

Fish tissue samples taken from the lake show the presence of polychlorobiphenyls (PCBs) and methylmercury. The Regional Board requested that the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) evaluate the potential health risk posed by consumption of fish from these lakes. Based on the evaluation, OEHHA issued a Health Advisory and Safe Eating Guidelines in June 2010 which recommended limits on consumption for some fish species. As an added precaution, however, the County of Los Angeles continues to advise park visitors not to consume fish from either of the Park's two lakes.

How can I get updates and more information regarding this project?

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the environmental investigation, please contact:

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Individuals can also call the 24/7 toll-free project hotline at 866-278-7207.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

For your convenience, documents have been placed in the AC Bilbrew Library.

AC Bilbrew Library
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