UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

DEC 0 6 2007

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: The SSFL: Santa Susana Field Laboratory
Ventura County, California

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering placement of the SSFL: Santa Susana Field Laboratory facility ("the Site") on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) pursuant to its authority under Section 105 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. Section 9605. By this letter, EPA is seeking the position of the State of California on listing the Site on the NPL.

Site Background

The SSFL is a 2850 acre facility located in Ventura County approximately 2 miles south of the City of Simi Valley and 30 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The SSFL is divided into operating Areas I, II, III, and IV, with two buffer zones. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is the owner of 451 acres of Area II. The remainder of the site is owned and operated by The Boeing Company (Boeing), which purchased the site from Rockwell International in 1996. A portion of Area IV is leased to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Since 1948, Rocketdyne (a division of Rockwell International and, later, Boeing) and NASA have conducted large rocket engine research, assembly and testing in Areas I, II, and III of the SSFL. These activities resulted in extensive chemical contamination of onsite soil and groundwater. In 1980, onsite drinking water wells were found to be contaminated with trichloroethylene (TCE) and were shut down after workers were exposed to TCE at concentrations above Federal and State limits. The extent of chemical contamination has not been fully characterized, but it is estimated that more than 500,000 gallons of TCE lie beneath the Site.

From 1956 to 1988, Rocketdyne and DOE used Area IV for nuclear energy research and development. Soil and groundwater at the Site are contaminated with radionuclides associated with the historic Area IV nuclear operations.

Contamination from the Site has the potential to impact municipal drinking water supplies in the future. In addition, several endangered or threatened species have the

potential to be exposed to surface water contamination at the site. There is insufficient data to determine whether contamination from the Site has migrated offsite. However, asbestos and polyaromatic hydrocarbons attributable to site operations were recently discovered along the northern boundary of the site.

Regulatory History

The ongoing cleanup of the chemical contamination is currently managed by the State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) under authority of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). DTSC is overseeing the RCRA corrective action process. DOE is conducting the investigation and remediation of radiological contamination associated with nuclear operations in Area IV under CERCLA authority. DOE is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement evaluating the cumulative impacts associated with DOE's activities at Area IV.

Current Status

In 2007, EPA conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation (PA/SI) under CERCLA to determine whether additional federal response at the Site was necessary. EPA's report documenting this investigation was issued in early December, 2007 and copies have been provided to the state and local regulatory agencies. Based on the PA/SI, EPA believes that long-term remedial action is required to properly address environmental and human health risks posed by the site.

EPA is aware of efforts that are in progress at the State level. These efforts, which are directed at ensuring a comprehensive and protective cleanup of the SSFL facility, may be undertaken along with listing. However, it is EPA's understanding that an agreement is not yet final and that it does not include federal participation.

As in the past, EPA is committed to coordinating with the State of California regarding Superfund listing proposals, and EPA is interested in receiving the State's response in this matter. I would appreciate your written response within 30 days of this letter in order for EPA to complete its decision-making process and determine whether to issue a proposed rule for the Site.

Should you require any additional information on this matter, please do not hesitate to call me at (415) 947-8702. Your staff may also wish to contact Keith Takata, Director of the Superfund Division at (415) 947-8709.

Sincerely,

Wayne Nastri
Regional Administrator