

# Willowbrook Community Update May 16, 2012

Former Athens Tank Farm Environmental Investigation

**Gita Kapahi**  
**Director of Public Participation**  
**California Water Boards**



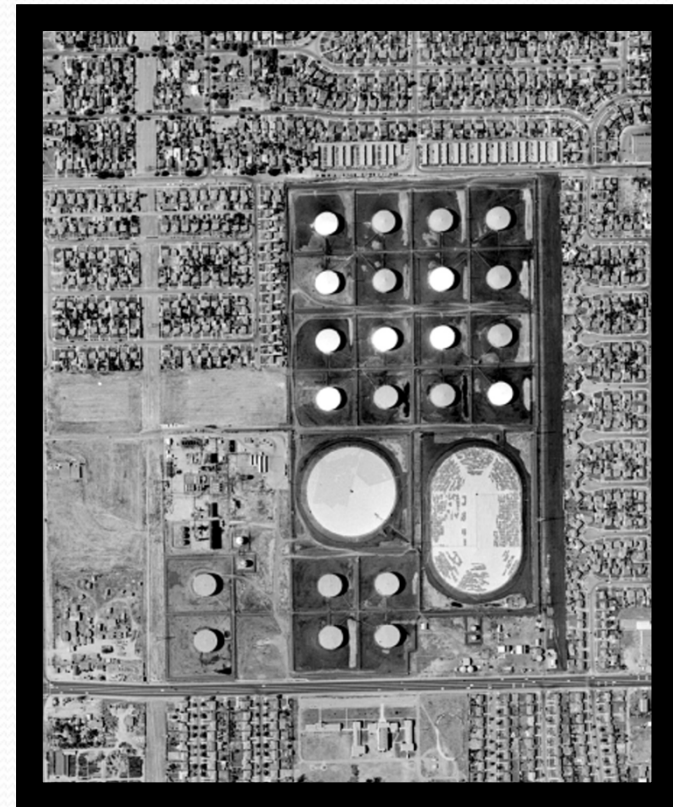
# Welcome

- Last community meeting May 2011
- Efforts to improve our communications:
  - Website accessibility
  - Open house forum
  - Smaller meetings with various community members including BCHTF and Honey's Little Angels Daycare parents.

# Background

1920s – 1960s

Site of Athens Tank Farm,  
owned and operated by a  
company that was  
eventually acquired  
by ExxonMobil.





# Background

1971 – 1972: Ujima Housing Village built.

1992 – 2007: Limited soil, soil vapor, and groundwater testing conducted at the site. Tests confirmed presence of petroleum related chemicals.

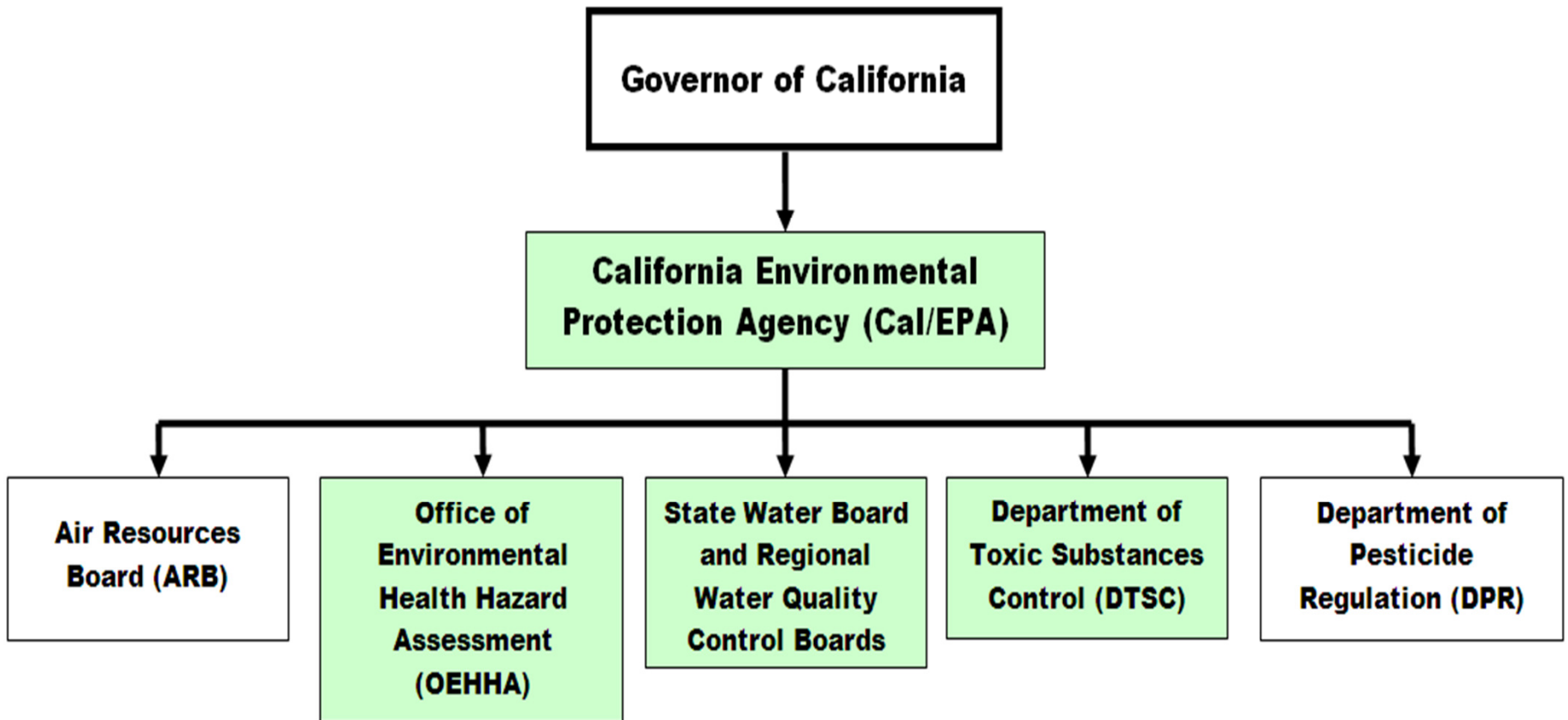


# Background

2007: LA County requests that the Regional Board provide oversight of a thorough environmental investigation.

2008: Ujima Village apartment resident relocation is completed – deterioration of the buildings.

# Why Cal/EPA?





## Why Cal/EPA?

- Water Board - strong authority to implement investigation and clean up
- Water Board - expertise with petroleum products and groundwater
- Department of Toxic Substances Control – health risk assessment
- Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment – health risk assessment

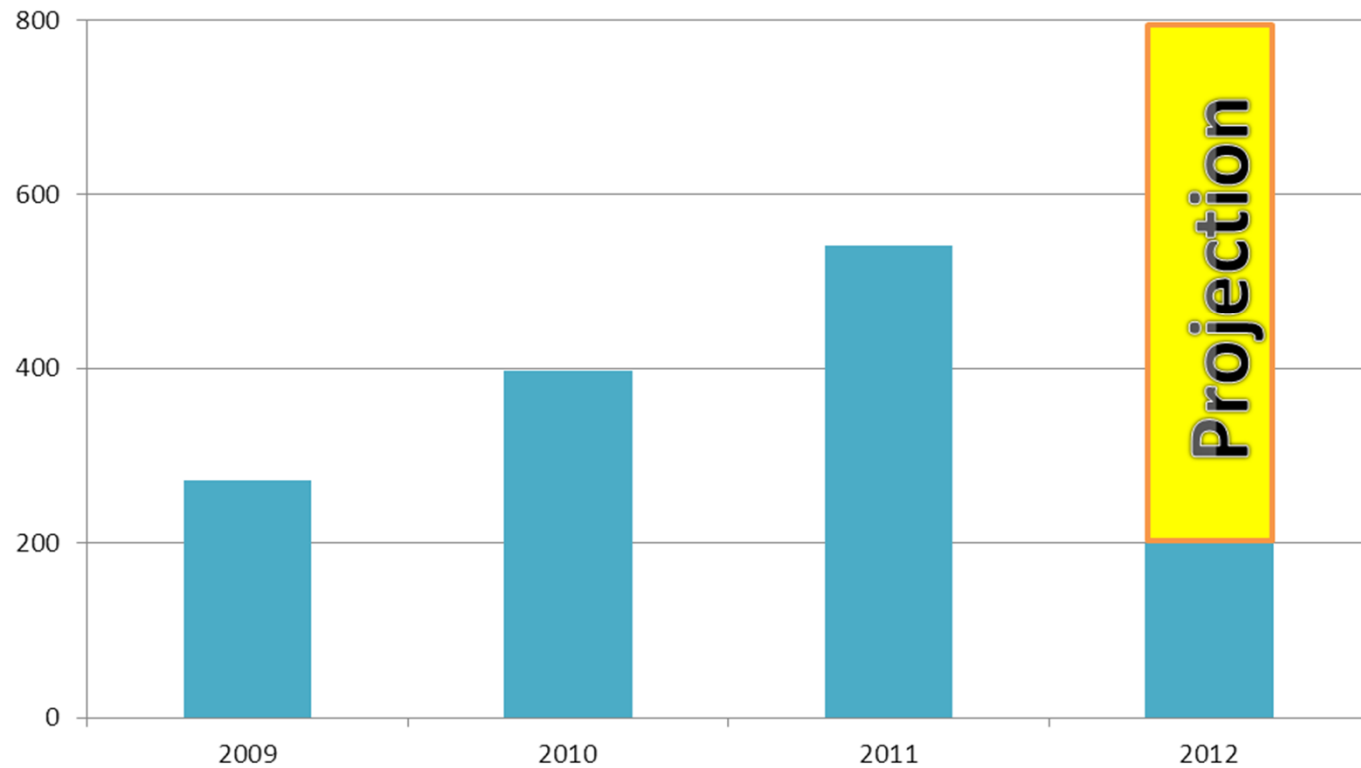


# Regional Board Investigation

- Thousands of samples taken to determine size and shape of the plume.
- Phased approach to the investigation
  - To be thorough, it will take time.
  - The phase of examining the footprint of the former tank farm is closing, we are now moving to the next phase.
- Focus is on risk to human health.



## Activities Including: Sampling, Wells & Borings



Year	Activities
2009	272
2010	397
2011	541
❖ 2012	200

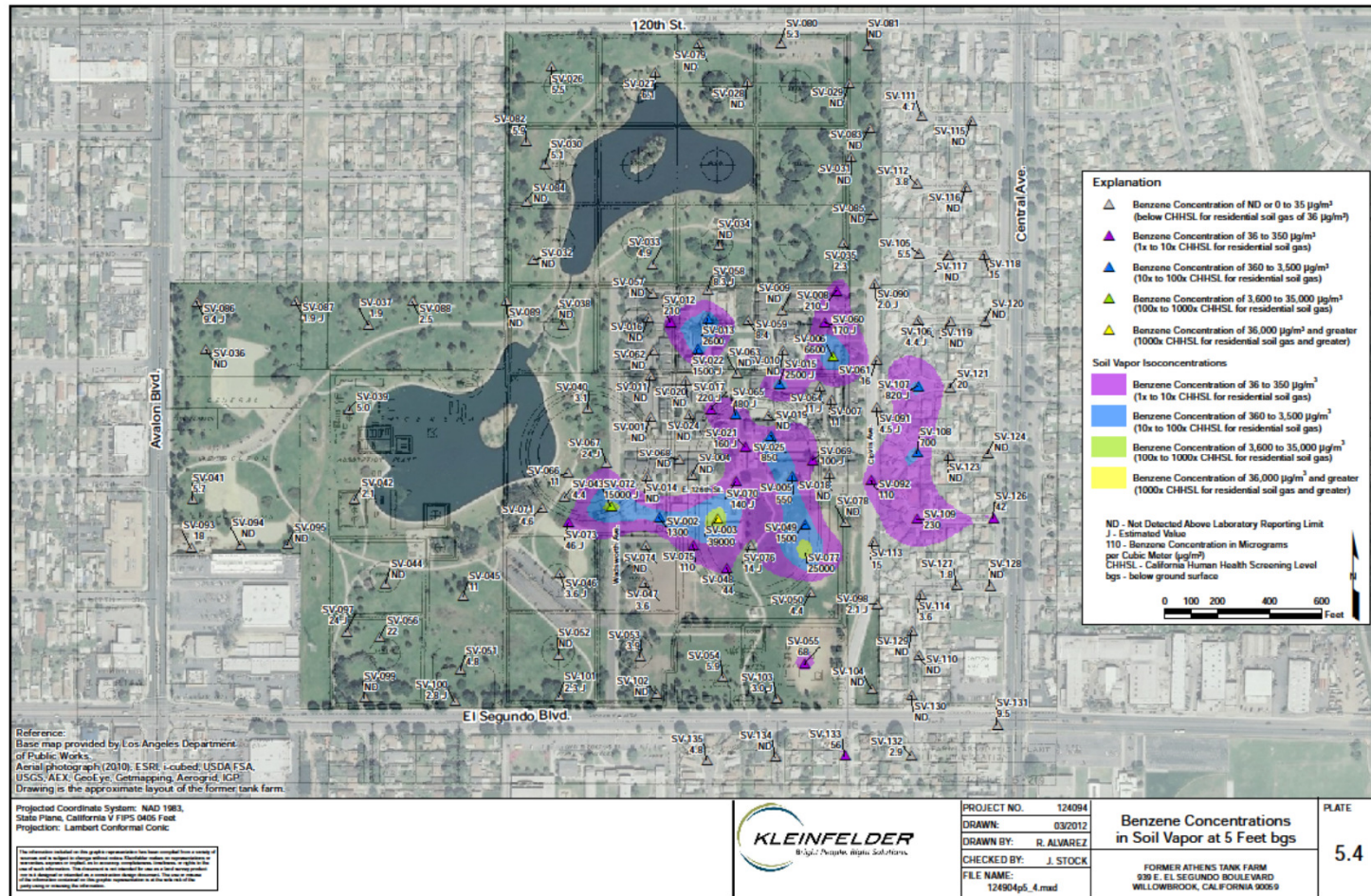
❖ First 3 Months (Jan-March 2012)



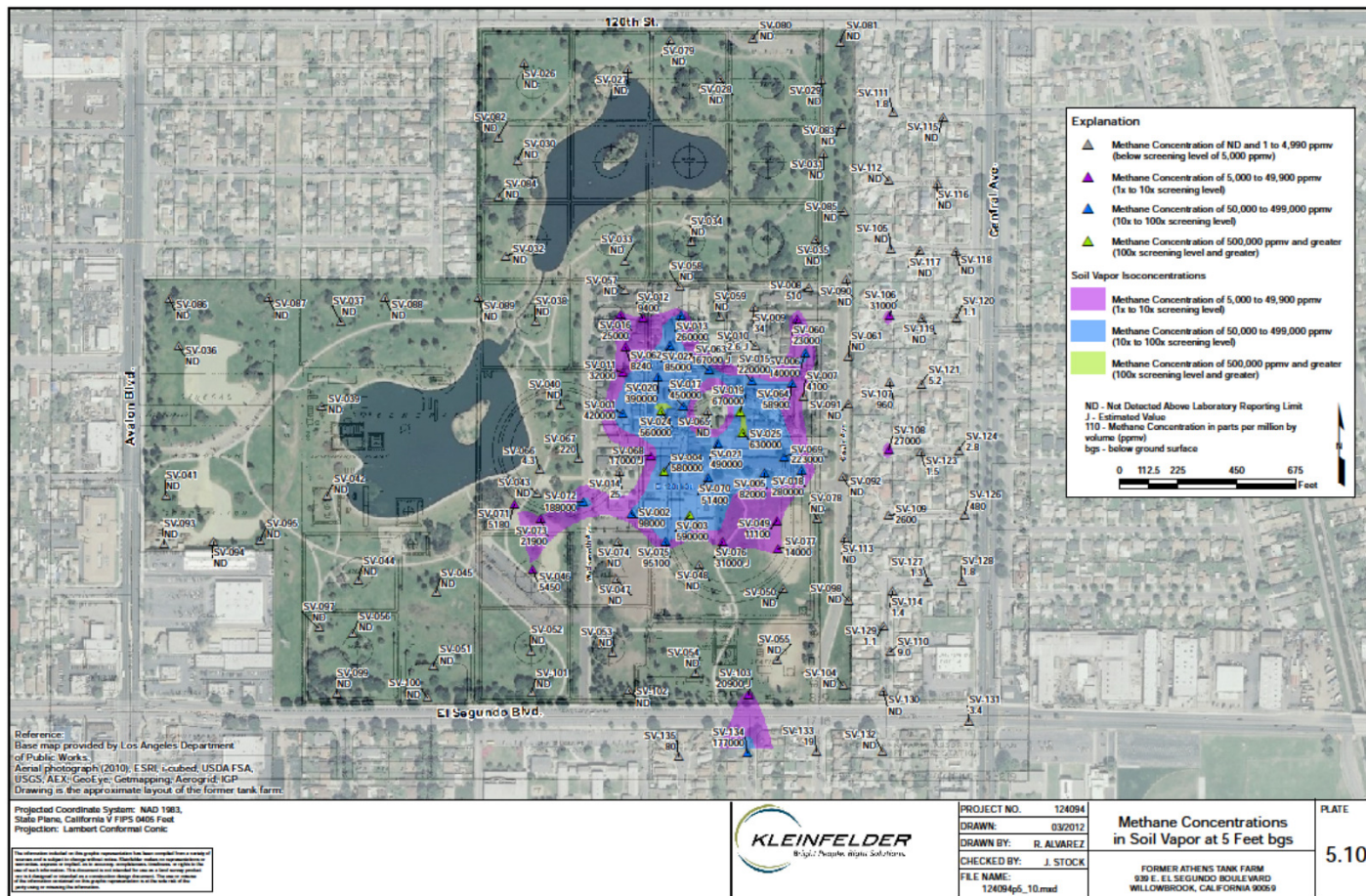
# Demolition of Ujima Village

- Demolition of Ujima Village was not ordered by the Regional Board as part of this investigation.

# Benzene Concentration Contours



# Methane Concentration Contours



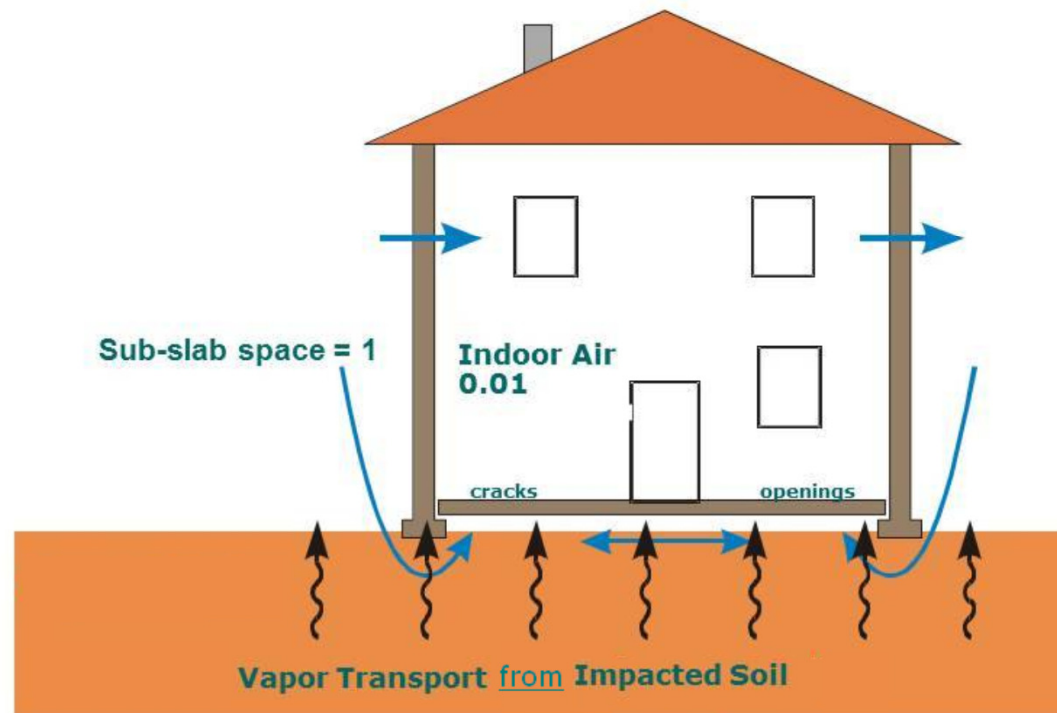


# Further Testing Offsite

- Based off samples taken on Eastern offsite residential streets:
- Further sampling is planned on 36 properties near sampling points where the highest concentrations were found nearest to homes.

# What are we looking for?

## VAPOR INTRUSION



# Testing Offsite Residences

## **What you may have heard...**

The Regional Board is ordering you to allow Exxon into your home.

## **What you need to know...**

No testing will take place in your home unless you allow it and sign an access agreement.



# Further Testing Offsite

- If further testing offsite indicates a potential health risk, steps will be taken to protect human health.





# Community Issues of Concern

- Extent of contamination - Is the plume moving?
- Testing results of soil vapor show higher than acceptable levels
- Natural dispersion of contaminants over time is not acceptable solution
- Regional Water Board integrity
- Automatic extensions of time to responsible parties

# Is the contamination moving?

## **What you may have heard...**

The plume is spreading underground in all directions from the site.

## **What you need to know...**

This is the first comprehensive investigation of the Site. The boundaries of the plume have never been defined.

# Testing Results

## What you may have heard...

Soil vapor results show higher than acceptable levels of petroleum chemicals.

## What you need to know...

Indoor and outdoor air quality assessment samples will tell us if the vapor in the soil is rising and contaminating the air you breathe.

# Natural Dispersion is Unacceptable Solution

## What you may have heard...

The government is waiting for the contamination to “take care of itself” over time.

## What you need to know...

The Regional Board is not waiting for natural dispersion. A comprehensive clean up plan is due to the Regional Board by June 15.

# Regional Board Integrity

## **What you may have heard...**

The Regional Board is not honest with the community regarding investigation findings and progress.

## **What you need to know...**

The Regional Board ordered the investigation and is overseeing every detail. The Regional Board is committed to identifying the extent of the pollution so the clean up phase is effective.

# Extensions of Time

## What you may have heard...

The Regional Board automatically gives more time to ExxonMobil whenever they ask for it.

## What you need to know...

Sometimes results are unclear. Sometimes testing cannot begin until permits from local governments are obtained.



# Health Questions

- Is my water safe?
- What is a health risk assessment?
- What can current residents of the offsite testing area do?
- What is the risk to the children at daycare?

# Is my water safe?

## What you may have heard...

Petroleum chemicals are in the water from our taps.

## What you need to know...

Drinking water from the tap is tested to ensure that it meets health standards. Groundwater from the site is not used.



# What is a health risk assessment?

## What you may have heard...

A health risk assessment is a physical exam including blood tests for chemicals.

## What you need to know...

An evaluation of chemicals levels and how they may affect the health of people exposed to them currently and in the future.

# What can current residents in the offsite testing areas do?

- There is no way for us to determine if you may be exposed with chemicals, unless we are able to test the air underneath or within your home.
- We cannot perform tests on your home without your permission.
- We want to know this information, so we can take appropriate next steps to protect human health.

# What is the risk to the daycare?

## What you may have heard...

The daycare was left behind when the apartments were relocated. Children are still being exposed to chemicals.

## What you need to know...

The Regional Board continues to work with many groups to coordinate another location for the daycare – before the apartments are demolished.

# What is the risk to the daycare?

## What you may have heard...

Testing at the daycare was not thorough.

## What you need to know...

Monitoring inside the daycare rooms, underneath the buildings, and in the surrounding areas has increased as an extra precaution to protect the children.

# What is the risk to the daycare?

## What you may have heard...

The daycare is being shut down due to petroleum related chemicals.

## What you need to know...

Test results have not shown a risk of chemical exposure at the daycare. The County and ExxonMobil are committed to a permanent solution for daycare relocation. The Regional Board is facilitating this discussion.



# More Information

- Community Water Suppliers: Golden State and Park Water Company.
- Drinking water quality reports in the back of the room.
- Local health clinic information in the back of the room.



# Moving Forward

- Next steps:
  - Cannot move forward with next phase of air quality testing until access agreements are signed. Regional Board staff available for questions about this process.
- More frequent community updates – next one tentatively scheduled for the fall.
- Improved website accessibility



# Ground Rules

- If you have a question or comment, you must fill out a speaker card.
- Cards will be read as written. If there is not a clear question, it will be read as a comment.
- No questions will be taken from the floor.
- Be respectful of other meeting attendees. All points of view have value.
- One question or comment per person, unless further time allows.





## Contact Information:

Gita Kapahi, Director of Public Participation  
California Water Boards

[gkapahi@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:gkapahi@waterboards.ca.gov)

916 341 5252

Rebecca Veiga Nascimento, Environmental Scientist  
Los Angeles Regional Water Board

[rveiga@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:rveiga@waterboards.ca.gov)

213 576 6784

[www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles)