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**CONTACT: Louise Rishoff**  
**(818)596-4141**

## **Assemblymember Brownley Lauds Historic SSFL Cleanup Deal**

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY** -- Just over 50 years ago, an uncontained partial nuclear meltdown occurred at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory in the Chatsworth Hills, with radioactive releases that the Department of Energy, NASA and Rocketdyne, the site operators, kept secret from the public and regulators for decades. A third of the core melted, power had risen uncontrollably, and fuel temperatures shot up to the level that the fuel rods lost their integrity and released massive amounts of radioactivity into the air. Later revelations uncovered more accidents in at least four of the ten nuclear reactors and a long list of reckless activities and disposal practices that have left the site both radioactively and chemically contaminated to this day. The accident has been compared to the Three Mile Island catastrophe, and may actually have been worse.

In 2007, then-State Senator Sheila Kuehl and Assemblymember Julia Brownley as joint authors, succeeded in getting legislation passed – SB990 – setting a very high standard for cleanup of the site. The Boeing Company, current owner of the site, has fought to overturn SB990 from the day it passed, and filed suit against California last year.

However, today the Department of Energy and NASA reached a historic agreement with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to clean up the site to background levels and in full compliance with SB990. The Environmental Protection Agency will do monitoring of the radiation cleanup. This will be one of the highest levels of cleanup of any contaminated site in the country.

“Today’s unprecedented agreement caps 30 years of struggle by the community to get this site cleaned up,” Assemblymember Brownley said. “Finally we have a deal with these two Federal entities. Too many people have gotten sick. Reports of radiation-associated cancers over the decades cannot be ignored. The importance of this deal cannot be overstated, and the community that has been so severely impacted by the presence of the SSFL virtually in their back yards will have the important opportunity to comment on the deal before the final signatures are put on paper.

“It’s also imperative that key people who have been working exhaustively over the years to reach this point get the recognition they deserve. State Senator Kuehl kept carrying legislation to get this cleanup done, never giving up after the special interests killed bill after bill until SB990, which I was proud to jointly author, was signed into law. CalEPA Secretary Linda Adams has been nothing short of heroic, and was hands-on every step of the way to insure that the public health and safety is fully protected to the highest level possible, and I am grateful to Governor Schwarzenegger for this newest expression of his commitment to environmental protection.

“None of this would have happened but for Senator Barbara Boxer’s personal intercession with the White House. She sealed this deal with DOE Secretary Steven Chu and NASA Administrator Charles Bolden. The DOE made a promise to the Senator’s Committee two years ago and she was going to hold them to it.

“Mostly, I need to thank the community members, who never lost hope, and never stopped fighting year after year after year. All of these people are truly amazing, and my admiration for them is unbounded.”

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