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Assemblymember Brownley Labels DOE, NASA Cleanup Settlements “Stupendous”

SACRAMENTO—Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, issued the following statement regarding today’s signing of final agreements between the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Department of Energy and NASA for the cleanup of the former Santa Susana Field Lab site in Simi Valley:

“The signing today of the final Agreements on Consent between the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Department of Energy and NASA for cleanup of the SSFL is nothing short of stupendous. Fighting the might of two huge Federal bureaucracies has been no picnic, and sometimes it seemed that this day would never come. But at the same time, I knew that it must come. Too many people around that site were sick, and too many had fought for far too long to get these agencies to clean up the radioactive and chemical mess that they left behind. Thanks to these agreements, the areas on which the DOE and NASA conducted their activities will now be cleaned up to background levels, which means as close as possible to what the site was before all the rocket engine testing and chemical spills and partial nuclear meltdown and everything else took place. It essentially winds back the clock to the time when families could safely hike and enjoy this beautiful land and never had to worry about breathing toxic waste or carrying it home on their clothes.

There are far too many people to thank by name who helped bring us to this point, but they certainly must include California EPA Secretary Linda Adams, who personally grabbed hold of this project and never let go until the DOE and NASA put pen to paper on final, binding, and enforceable agreements. A true environmental hero. And those signatures likely still wouldn’t have happened but for the personal intercession of Nobel Peace Prize-winning U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, and U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer.

The loop won’t be closed until the Boeing Company, that owns the remaining and largest part of the site, lays down its sword and stops resisting. To Boeing I say; ‘call off your lawyers, turn off your slick PR machine, and dismiss your lawsuit against the people of California fighting the state cleanup law. Enough is enough. You can still come out of this looking like the responsible corporate giant that you portray yourself to be. The ratio of the 2,000 public comments received on the final settlement agreements ran 200:1 in favor. Do the right thing, and, 50 years later, let’s get to work cleaning up the entire site without further delay.’”

Assemblymember Brownley is principal co-author of SB 990 along with then-Senator Sheila Kuehl, which set the cleanup standards for the site into law in 2007.