KETTLEMAN CITY ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) is investigating environmental conditions in Kettleman City. Cal/EPA has identified potential environmental contaminants and will soon evaluate Kettleman City's air, water and soil. to look for these chemicals. Below is a summary of the technical work plan that details how Cal/EPA will investigate potential contaminants in the City.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION?

The purpose is to assess exposure to environmental contaminants in Kettleman City. The results will help Cal/EPA determine if there are unsafe levels of chemicals that may have contributed to the recent birth defects.

HOW LONG WILL THE INVESTIGATION TAKE?

The investigation and sampling will begin in May/June 2010. A draft report is expected in the fall of 2010, followed by a comment period and community meeting. The final report should be available before the end of the year. Cal/EPA is committed to a transparent process and will keep the community informed along the way. Public comment on the technical document is due by May 25, 2010.

HOW WILL THE INVESTIGATION WORK?

Cal/EPA is coordinating a team of environmental experts from its Boards, Departments and Offices to assess potential environmental contaminants in the air, groundwater and soil. The investigation will also test for certain potential cancer causing chemicals. The team will:

- *TEST THE AIR:* Analyze air samples for metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), sulfur dioxide, polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins, and furans – many of which can cause developmental effects. Scientists will also assess community exposure to diesel exhaust. Sampling is proposed to occur at the Kettleman City Elementary School and the Kettleman Hills Hazardous Waste Facility,
- *SAMPLE THE SOIL:* Test the soil for volatile organic compounds and other chemicals that may cause birth defects. Sample the aqueduct and irrigation canal to evaluate potential contaminants in fish and the people who consume the fish. Examine potential sources of chemicals from present and past activities including the Kettleman Hills Hazardous Waste Facility, agricultural operations, illegal dump sites, naturally occurring hazardous chemicals such as arsenic, as well as industrial and legacy petroleum pollution.
- *ANALYZE THE WATER:* Sample water in local wells and residences for arsenic, benzene and other hazardous chemicals. Test the groundwater, aqueduct and canal for toxic runoff in sediment.
- *PROBE PESTICIDE USE:* Evaluate potential health risks from pesticides applied in the area. Research past use of pesticides near residents. Use computer modeling to estimate pesticide exposures in the community and monitor for certain pesticides.
- *COMPARE CHEMICALS:* Identify chemicals known or suspected to affect babies' development and compare air, water and soil samples from Kettleman City. Consider how different chemicals in the air, water and soil interact to affect human health.

WILL THE INVESTIGATION BE ABLE TO FIND PAST EXPOSURES TO CHEMICALS?
Researchers will look at historical records to see which chemicals may have been present in the air, water and soil during the time of the reported birth defects.

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT IN THE FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT?
The final assessment report will identify the presence of any chemicals investigated at levels of concern. The report could recommend further investigation of the chemicals and their sources or appropriate actions to reduce exposures to those chemicals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Go to http://www.calepa.ca.gov/EnvJustice/News/default.htm. For additional information, or to request a free printed copy, contact Dr. David Siegel, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 1001 I St/PO Box 4010, Sacramento, CA 95812, 916-324-2829 or irab@oehha.ca.gov. Para asistencia en Español, comuniquese con: Ricardo Martinez al 916-324-7316 o por correo electrónico a rmartinez@calepa.ca.gov.