



News Release

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State Releases Final Report on Kettleman City Investigation

SACRAMENTO – The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today released the final report on their investigation of environmental and health conditions in Kettleman City. The report could not find a conclusive link to the birth defects reported in Kettleman City, but it did make recommendations to improve the overall health of the community.

Gov. Schwarzenegger directed the two agencies to investigate cases of Kettleman City children born with major structural birth defects. CDPH analyzed birth records and interviewed mothers who agreed to participate. Cal/EPA tested the air, water, and soil and monitored for pesticides in Kettleman City and at the nearby Chemical Waste Management Kettleman Hills hazardous waste facility.

The report updates a draft that was released in late November. It was finalized after reviewing comments from Kettleman City residents who spoke out at public meetings, wrote letters, and cooperated with state investigators and scientific tests.

“This report documents one of the most thorough environmental health investigations ever conducted in California,” said Cal/EPA Secretary Linda Adams. “Although we did not identify a conclusive cause for the recent birth defects in Kettleman City, we plan to follow up with additional actions that we hope will benefit families in the community.”

In addition to reviewing each of the birth defect cases and explaining the results of environmental testing and monitoring, the report outlines next steps designed to help residents.

Recommendations include:

- The State will continue to work with the community services district and has offered funding to help pursue a new source of drinking water for Kettleman City to reduce the level of arsenic in the community’s water.
- The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) will conduct statewide risk assessments for diazinon and chlorpyrifos to determine if mitigation measures are needed. DPR will implement statewide mitigation measures in 2011 to reduce exposures to MITC.
- The California Air Resources Board will work with the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District to evaluate benzene emissions from the air stripping units at the municipal water wells, particularly the southwest well.
- Officials will conduct further investigation and possible cleanup of chlordane contamination at one home.
- The State will provide the community with an update on implementation of these recommendations by July 1, 2011.

The final report is being distributed throughout the Kettleman City community, including copies available at the local post office, library, and elementary school. The report is also posted online at www.calepa.ca.gov/EnvJustice/News/ and at www.cdph.ca.gov. The English version is being posted today and the Spanish version will be posted during the first week of January.

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