

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP

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**HISTORIC CLEANUP AGREEMENT REACHED FOR
FORMER NUCLEAR FACILITY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

State and federal governments signed agreements today to clean up toxic contamination at Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL), a former nuclear reactor and rocket testing facility in the Simi Hills overlooking the western San Fernando Valley and Simi Valley. The clean-up agreements were lauded by Committee to Bridge the Gap and the Natural Resources Defense Council, two organizations that have worked for decades with the nearby communities seeking thorough site remediation.

SSFL housed ten atomic reactors, four of which suffered accidents, including a partial fuel meltdown in 1959, as well as tens of thousands of rocket tests. Site activities resulted in widespread radioactive and chemical contamination.

"Today's announcement signifies a new, cleaner future for the Santa Susana site, the nearby residents, and all of Southern California," said Geoffrey Fettus, Senior Project Attorney for NRDC's Nuclear Program. "This chronically toxic and radioactively contaminated facility has been wrangled over for more than 20 years, making this cleanup long overdue but very welcome. We congratulate the signatories and look forward to seeing the cleanup of all the contamination move forward."

The agreements were executed today by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and NASA, and cover the DOE and NASA portions of SSFL.

"Praise goes to the dedicated community members who, year after frustrating year, never gave up in their efforts to get the federal agencies to meet their obligations to clean up the toxic mess they made," said Daniel Hirsch, President of the Committee to Bridge the Gap. "Today's signing is a monumental victory for everyday people who prevailed against powerful institutions and great odds in their fight to protect their families. It has national significance."

Long-time resident Dawn Kowalski, who lives just beneath the SSFL facility, said, "What a huge victory. Thank you DOE and NASA for stepping up to the plate and restoring the site. Our neighborhood the Susana Knolls is nestled below the SSFL field lab and has lived in the shadow of this contaminated site for decades. We have fought to have the site cleaned up for over twenty years. It has been a long and at many times a fierce battle.

"Now we just wait for Boeing to do the right thing and sign a similar consent agreement and clean up their portion of the site. But let us not overshadow the glorious victory of today. DOE

and NASA have now shown their concern for us their neighbors and for that we applaud them.

“We will soon be able to fall asleep at night and not worry about the contamination on the hill oozing down the mountain, or blowing off in the Santa Ana winds to rest on unsuspecting souls. December 6th is a historic day for nuclear and toxic waste cleanup and Southern California. Hooray.”

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