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## **NRDC/CBG MEDIA ALERT**

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### **PUBLIC HEALTH GROUPS ANNOUNCE PLANS TO SUE ENERGY DEPARTMENT FOR FAILING TO CLEAN UP SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, NUCLEAR SITE**

#### **GROUPS CHARGE DOE IS VIOLATING FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS**

Two public health groups today notified the Department of Energy they intend to sue the agency for violating federal environmental laws in its ongoing effort to clean up Rocketdyne's Santa Susana Field Laboratory in Simi Valley, California. The groups, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and Committee to Bridge the Gap (CBG), charge that agency's cleanup plan for the site, where various U.S. agencies conducted nuclear research over four decades, would leave dangerous levels of radioactive tritium, the solvent trichloroethylene, perchlorate (a chemical used in rocket fuel), and other toxic chemicals and radioactive material that pose a threat to public health.

DOE now has 60 days to comply with the law in its cleanup effort or NRDC and CBG intend to file a lawsuit. The groups specifically charge that the agency is in violation of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), and the Endangered Species Act. Under federal law, groups intending to file such lawsuits must give 60-day notice. (For a pdf copy of the groups' 12-page letter to DOE, contact NRDC.)

Since the 1950s, DOE, NASA and the Defense Department held nuclear experiments at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, which included a plutonium fuel fabrication facility, a facility for cutting up irradiated nuclear fuel, and approximately 10 nuclear reactors, one of which experienced a partial meltdown. Operators of the site also routinely burned contaminated reactor components in an open pit overlooking Simi Valley.

Late last year the Environmental Protection Agency determined that DOE's cleanup efforts at the site will leave too much radioactivity in place to meet federal standards for unrestricted land use. DOE intends that the land will eventually be used for housing, but has embraced a plan that would leave 99 percent of the contaminated soil in place.

NRDC and CBG are represented by the Washington, D.C., law firm, Meyer & Glitzenstein.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, non-profit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has more than 1 million members and e-activists nationwide, served by offices in New York, Washington, Santa Monica and San Francisco. More information on NRDC is available at its Web site, [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org).

The Committee to Bridge the Gap is a Los Angeles-based nuclear policy organization that has fought for 25 years for the cleanup of the Santa Susana site. Founded in 1970, CBG works on nuclear safety, waste, proliferation, and terrorism issues.

The Notice letter to DOE announcing the suit is attached.

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