



MARK B HORTON, MD, MSPH
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health

CORRESPONDENCE NO. 2

Page 1 of 3



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

August 2, 2010

Mr. Chairman Jeff Grover
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors
1010 10th Street, Suite 6500
Modesto, CA 95354

✓
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2010 AUG -4 A 11: 33

RE: Public Health Activities related to the Modesto dry cleaner investigations being overseen by the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Dear Mr. Grover,

As you are aware, there are ongoing investigations by different government agencies on several former and current dry cleaners in Modesto. The purpose of these investigations is to find out if and what chemicals from these dry cleaner sites have contaminated the environment.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is undertaking public health activities at these sites through a Cooperative Agreement with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

CDPH will conduct community outreach and an evaluation of environmental data to assess past and present risks of exposures to contaminants from several of these dry cleaner sites. This letter provides an overview of the process and whom you and your constituents can contact for additional information.

The Public Health Assessment Process

A Public Health Assessment is a report that evaluates possible risks of exposure to contaminants, now and in the past, if data is available.

CDPH will evaluate environmental and health data, if relevant and available. Environmental data related to contamination from several of these dry cleaner sites will be provided to CDPH by regulatory and private agencies. In addition, CDPH will seek and document community health and exposure concerns related to these dry cleaner sites in order to better understand possible exposures and determine additional community needs. The report culminates in a series of recommendations aimed at protecting public health.

Mr. Chairman Jeff Grover
Page 2 of 3
August 2, 2010

Evaluation of Environmental Data

CDPH will obtain environmental data from the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and other regulatory agencies. These data will be analyzed to determine if there is a risk of exposure to contaminants, what levels of contaminants one may be exposed to, and whether such exposure might represent a public health hazard. CDPH will evaluate present risk of exposure. CDPH will also evaluate past risk of exposure using available data and assumption models.

Collection of Community Concerns

To collect and document community health and exposure concerns, CDPH may use outreach methods such as telephone conversations, one-on-one meetings, public availability sessions, mail, e-mail, and public notices in the newspaper, depending on the community's preferences. Additionally, CDPH will coordinate with DTSC's community outreach efforts. CDPH's interactions with community members are open-ended, without health surveys.

CDPH wants to hear from the community to:

- Understand possible exposure pathways we may miss by reviewing data alone. For example, we may hear that people in the community have access to the site through means we were not aware.
- Compile community health concerns. We will evaluate these in a part of the document, to try to understand if the health concerns are known to be associated with the types of contaminant found on-site and at what levels of exposure. We will put the concerns into context, though we cannot prove a causal link.
- Assess what groups exist in a community and the best method of outreach for each.

Having an understanding of the community's concerns adds an important dimension to the analysis and in the deliberation of recommendations needed to protect public health at a site. However, CDPH will not be surveying people or following them over time. CDPH will not have survey data to conduct any statistical analysis. All the interview data will be qualitative and will be summarized in a qualitative way. To protect the identity of community members who speak with CDPH, we summarize concerns in a general way, without identifying information.

Results of the Public Health Assessment

The report culminates in a series of recommendations aimed at protecting public health. Recommendations are sometimes aimed towards the regulatory agency (such as regarding the cleanup process), sometimes aimed at CDPH (such as when education is needed), sometimes at other involved agencies with jurisdiction over particular items (such as posting a warning sign, putting up a fence, etc).

CDPH follows up to determine whether or not recommendations have been implemented.

Mr. Chairman Jeff Grover
Page 3 of 3
August 2, 2010

Who to Contact

Community members who have health or exposure concerns related to Modesto dry cleaner investigation and would like to have their concerns included in the Public Health Assessment can contact Nancy Palate of CDPH at:

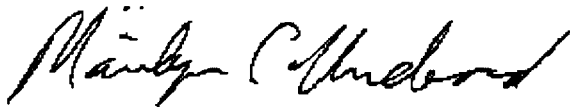
Nancy Palate
Site Assessment Section
Environmental Health Investigations Branch
California Department of Public Health
850 Marina Bay Parkway, P-3
Richmond, CA 94804

Telephone: (510) 620-5845
Fax: (510) 620-3720

Email: Nancy.Palate@cdph.ca.gov

We look forward to working with your community, local government agencies and community based organizations to address public health concerns about contamination from former or current dry cleaners in Modesto. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Marilyn C. Underwood, Ph.D., Chief
Site Assessment Section
Environmental Health Investigations Branch