



Jared Blumenfeld
Secretary for
Environmental Protection



Department of Toxic Substances Control

Meredith Williams, Ph.D.
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Gavin Newsom
Governor

November 26, 2019

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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Mr. Jim Bullock
Director of Capital Projects, Operations & Safety
Hilmar Unified School District
7807 North Lander Avenue
Hilmar, California 95324

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

REQUEST FOR EARLY CONSULTATION FOR AN INITIAL STUDY FOR THE NEW
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT, GEER AVENUE AND PEARL STREET,
HILMAR, MERCED COUNTY (SCH #2019110288)

Dear Mr. Bullock:

The Northern California Schools Unit of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has received the request for early consultation (REC) for an Initial Study (IS) for the New Elementary School project proposed by the Hilmar Unified School District (District). The due date to submit comments is December 6, 2019.

As reported in the REC, the proposed project includes the construction and operation of a new elementary school campus on a turfed area currently being used by Hilmar High School, as well as the reconfiguration of a portion of the existing Elim Elementary School site. The project site encompasses approximately 18 acres at the northwest corner of Geer Avenue and Pearl Street in the community of Hilmar, Merced County, California (Site).

Based on a review of the REC, DTSC would like to provide the following comments:

1. If the District plans to use State funds for the Project, then the District shall comply with the requirements of California Education Code, sections 17210, 17213.1 and 17213.2, unless otherwise specifically exempted under section 17268. If the District is not using State funds for the Project, or is otherwise specifically exempted under section 17268, DTSC recommends the District continue to investigate and clean up the Site, if necessary, under the oversight of Merced County and in concurrence with all applicable DTSC guidance documents.

A local education agency may also voluntarily request the California Department of

Education (CDE) site/plan approval for locally funded site acquisitions and new construction projects. In these cases, CDE will require DTSC review and approval prior to its final approval, except when exempt under section 17268.

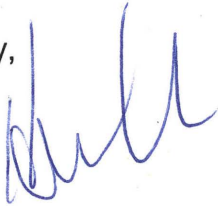
2. The presence of existing, older or former structures at the Site may result in potential environmental concerns due to lead from lead-based paint and/or organochlorine pesticides from termiticide applications and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from electrical transformers, light ballast or window caulking or glazing. DTSC recommends that these environmental concerns be investigated and possibly mitigated, in accordance with DTSC's *"Interim Guidance, Evaluation of School Sites with Potential Soil Contamination as a Result of Lead from Lead-Based Paint, Organochlorine Pesticides from Termiticides, and Polychlorinated Biphenyls from Electrical Transformers, dated June 9, 2006"*, and in accordance with the recommendations provided in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's website "Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in Building Materials" (<https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/polychlorinated-biphenyls-pcbs-building-materials>).
3. If the Site is, or was previously, used for agricultural purposes, pesticides (such as DDT, DDE, and toxaphene) and fertilizers (usually containing heavy metals) commonly used as part of agricultural operations are likely to be present. These agricultural chemicals are persistent and bio-accumulative toxic substances. DTSC recommends that these environmental concerns be investigated and possibly mitigated, in accordance with the *"Interim Guidance for Sampling Agricultural Soils (Third Revision)"*, dated August 2008. This guidance should be followed to sample agricultural properties where development is anticipated.
4. If fill material exists on the Site, DTSC recommends these areas be investigated and possibly mitigated in accordance with DTSC's *"Information Advisory, Clean Imported Fill"*, dated October 2001.
5. If a response action is required based on the results of the above investigations, and/or other information, the IS will require an analysis of the potential public health and environmental impacts associated with any proposed response action, pursuant to requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA - Pub. Resources Code, Division 13, section 21000 et seq.), and its implementing Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15000 et seq.), prior to approval or adoption of a CEQA determination for the Project. A discussion of the mitigation and/or removal actions, if necessary, and associated cumulative impacts to the Project properties and the surrounding environment, should be included in the IS and final CEQA determination. If sufficient information to discuss the proposed mitigation and/or removal actions, and their associated impacts to the Project properties and the surrounding environment, are not available for inclusion in the IS, then an Addendum or Supplement to the final CEQA determination may be required.

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DTSC is also administering the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program which provides revolving loans to investigate and clean up hazardous materials at properties where redevelopment is likely to have a beneficial impact to a community. These loans are available to developers, businesses, schools, and local governments.

For additional information on DTSC's Schools process or RLF Program, please visit DTSC's web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me at (916) 255-3695, or via email at Bud.Duke@dtsc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Harold (Bud) Duke, PG
Northern California Schools Unit
Site Mitigation and Restoration Program

cc: (via email)

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