

Special Regional Board Meeting to Consider Chromium Groundwater Contamination

ULARA Watermasters Role In Dealing with San Fernando Valley's
Water Quality Management, November 13, 2000

- I. Melvin L. Blevins – Registered Civil Engineering – ULARA Watermaster (Court Appointed) and experienced teacher at USC, UCLA, Loyola Marymount and UC Davis – past 30 years.
Subjects–Groundwater Management and Water Quality Management.

- II. Professional Background/work related responsibilities.
 - Major groundwater management studies/responsible activities – San Fernando Valley – (43 years).

 - Court Appointed Watermaster – January 1979 (21^{1/2} years) – Dealing with Water Rights/Groundwater Contamination/Groundwater Modeling and Superfund studies

 - Owens Valley Groundwater Management/Lawsuits
– (1970-Sept. 1998) – (28 years).

 - Mono Lake Litigation – (over 10 years – March 1979-1990).

 - Since 1998 – Under Contract – Continue my Role as ULARA Watermaster – Report to Los Angeles Superior Court – subjects dealing with Water Management and Water Rights – Judge Susan Bryant –Deason – Department 52).

 - ULARA Administrative Board – (Los Angeles, Burbank, Glendale, San Fernando, and Crescenta Valley Water District) – Monthly meetings/work with water purveyors/regulatory agencies, etc./ File with Court: 1.) Watermaster Report – (May); 2.) Pump and Spread Report – (July); 3.) Policies and Procedures (Implementing Judgment).

- III. Groundwater Management and Water Quality Studies (Past 43 years) – San Fernando Valley
 - Water Rights – (24 years of litigation)
Dealing with water quality and quantity
 - Superfund – (USEPA) – 1986 to present year 2000 – five volumes – Remedial Investigation (RI-SFV) – Dealing with VOCs – Geology/ Hydrogeology/Modeling/ etc.
 - Studies/Evaluation/ Nitrate, and Chromium VI.
 - Chromium Task Force – Chair (Moderated) meetings – Feb 1998 to present.

IV. Chromium Issues – Reports/Task Force

- Chromium Task Force – Meetings
- (Feb. 1998 thru Oct 5, 2000) – Include report to Los Angeles City Council and Letter of Oct. 12, 2000 (covering details of Oct 5, 2000 meeting.)
- Los Angeles City Council Meeting – Environmental Quality and Waste Management – Nov. 9, 1998.
 - Overview of ULARA Groundwater supply
 - Groundwater contamination – status
 - Chromium VI Contamination
 - Conclusion and Recommendations
 - Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowki Report Back – 60 days.
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Los Angeles City Council Meeting – Environmental Quality and Waste Management – January 25, 1999.

- Overview by ULARA Watermaster – Mel Blevins
- Status of Public Health Goal – Dr. Kimi Klein
- Chromium source Investigation – RWQCB – Catherine Tyrrell
- LA/DWP Investigation – Dr. Pankaj Parekh
- Letters – Chromium VI Issues
 - Oct 1998 to Ms. Felicia Marcus (USEPA) and Mr. John Caffrey (SWRCB) Appeal for support
 - Nov 24, 1998 – from SWRCB – Additional funding for RWWCB to identify sources of Chromium contamination.
 - Dec 14, 1998 – comments to OEHHA regarding Public Health Goal to Juliet Rafol.
- Report to full City Council of Los Angeles – No further action needed at this time. Jan 29, 1999 – Reports from LA/DWP, LARWQCB, WM, DTSC, etc. 1/29/99.

Los Angeles City Council Meeting – December 2000 (?)

- Report from WM to City Council – from LA/DWP and Watermaster
- Conclusion of studies/reports/investigations

V. Reports to Los Angeles Times/Glendale Press

Los Angeles Times – August 20, 2000 – Andrew Blankstein

- Calls for reducing Chromium VI levels in water
- Not all agree that chemical poses a risk
- Chromium used in manufacturing
- New standards could be difficult to obtain and costly
- Concerns that Chromium may be increasing.
- Description of how Chromium gets into groundwater
- LA/DWP's testing – Pollock #6 /Mission #7 /North Hollywood (#28 and #45) / Tujunga Well #6
- Chromium VI about 2 to 5 ppb
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- Conclusion – (Chromium III and Chromium VI) monitoring water
- Los Angeles Times – October 30, 2000 – Chromium VI Releases to Los Angeles River – Blankstein/Blevins
 - Records from ULARA Watermaster Discharges into Burbank-Western Storm Drain Channel – Los Angeles River – Chromium VI from 1940 to 1965
 - High Levels of Chromium VI – as high as 80,000 ppb.
 - Discharges into Los Angeles River percolate into unlined reaches (7+ miles).
 - Chromium VI then travels to groundwater and wells of Los Angeles, Glendale, Burbank, etc. (13 to 15 cfs into unlined channel).
 - Debates over Chromium VI standards
 - Toxic levels in Burbank – Western Wash and Los Angeles River travels to wells.
 - Scientists divided over Chromium VI threat.

VI. LA Times – November 18, 2000 – Cities Seeking Ways to Recoup Chromium VI Expenses.

- Use of Chromium VI by Lockheed and other companies.
- Watermaster to seek depositions of engineers from the past.
- Water rights are property rights
- Litigation to follow – Los Angeles, Burbank, Glendale.

VII. Conclusions/ Recommendations Regarding Chromium VI Problem and What is Next?

- More monitoring to evaluate extent of Chromium VI in San Fernando Valley
- More testing needed to evaluate the Chromium standard that should be used – (50 ppb or less).
- PHG of 2.5 ppb appears to be too small and unrealistic as a goal.
- Finally – all water purveyors/regulatory agencies/sources of Chromium VI needed.