

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

**STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Curtis Scott)
MEETING DATE: March 16, 2005**

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: Former Zeneca Site, Richmond, Contra Costa County - Status Report

DISCUSSION: This item provides an update on the cleanup at the former Zeneca Site in Richmond and the political influences impacting that cleanup. Stauffer Chemical Company and several other companies formerly operated the Site, which is located along the Bay shoreline in south Richmond. For nearly a century, a wide range of chemicals including sulfuric acid, herbicides, pesticides and fungicides were produced at the Site. Spill and releases associated with chemical production and waste materials resulted in soil, marsh sediment, and groundwater contamination from pesticides, volatile organic chemicals, and metals in waste cinders resulting from sulfuric acid production. The waste cinders have caused acidic groundwater conditions. Areas impacted at the Site include the Upland Area where the production facilities were located, Stege Marsh, and the Site's stormwater ponds known as the Freshwater Lagoons.

Board oversight of spills and releases at the Site began on a limited basis in 1980, but expanded in the 1990s when the extent of the Site's contamination became better known. At its September 2001 Board meeting, the Board adopted Site Cleanup Requirements (SCRs) to require Zeneca to cleanup the Site. The SCRs required cleanup of all impacted areas in accordance with a Board-approved cleanup plan. The cleanup plan required analysis of any potential impacts to human and ecological receptors, development of cleanup levels for soil and groundwater, specification of methods to achieve the cleanup levels, completion of risk assessments, restoration of Stege Marsh and the Freshwater Lagoons, recording of deed restrictions, and completion of additional sampling and investigations, both during the cleanup and afterwards.

As required by the SCRs, the first phase of cleanup in the Upland Area was conducted during the summer and winter of 2002, with a second phase of work during the summer and winter of 2003. By November 2003, cleanup of the Upland Area was nearly complete. This cleanup consisted of the neutralization and stabilization of waste cinders, soil and groundwater, installation of a subsurface permeable barrier wall to prevent contaminants in the Upland Area from moving into Stege Marsh, hotspot cleanup, replacement of leaking storm drains, and installation of a temporary cap to control exposure of treated soils to rain water, wind and the public. Presently, only a few areas of cleanup or treatment of groundwater remain to be completed in the Upland Area under the Board's cleanup order. The long-term effectiveness of the cleanup activities at the site is being monitored and evaluated. A majority of the contaminated sediments in Stege Marsh have been removed, with the remainder of removal and marsh replanting to occur next fall.

Despite the significance and success of the cleanup at the site, the cleanup has drawn recent criticism from local groups, largely due to concerns over the future use of the Site. One complaint from the public about cleanup activities was received and responded to during the 2002 and 2003 construction periods. In fall 2003, the property was purchased by Cherokee Simeon Ventures (CSV), who subsequently announced plans to change the present land use from industrial to residential (apartment/townhouse complex). In early 2004, not long after CSV's announcement, the local community began voicing concerns regarding CSV's proposal to change the land use to residential and its specific plans for 1300 units of housing. At the same time, concerns were also raised that the marsh restoration work proposed for the fall of 2004 could potentially impact public health. Throughout late spring and summer 2004, Board staff met on numerous occasions with the public to address their concerns. Numerous verbal and written assurances were given to the public that their health and welfare would be protected. As a result of concerns raised by the public, additional Site monitoring and controls were required by Board staff to insure protection of public health.

However, likely because staff did not require a delay in implementing the marsh restoration plan and was slow to make it clear that the Board could not approve any change in land use until the City of Richmond had approved such a change, a number of local groups insisted that they would be better protected by DTSC assuming oversight of the Site's cleanup activities. In November 2004, Cal EPA, the Water Board and DTSC agreed to divide oversight of the Site as the result of public meeting held by Assemblymembers Hancock and Montanez. The agreement consists of DTSC overseeing all cleanup activities in the Uplands Area, and the Water Board continuing to oversee all activities in the Stege Marsh and Freshwater Lagoon areas.

The final phase of Stege Marsh Cleanup will be completed in the fall of this year. This includes removal of a few small remaining areas of contaminated sediments, bringing the marsh to proper elevation levels using clean bay sediment backfill and replanting. Monitoring to ensure successful restoration will continue for 5 years.

**RECOMMEN-
DATION:**

This Item is informational only, and requires no Board action.

File No. 2119.1185 (CSF)