

Sheila James Kuehl

August 3, 2009

STATEMENT TO VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SSFL Grading Permit

Dear Chair Bennett and Boardmembers:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.

During my entire tenure as a State Assemblymember and State Senator, cleanup of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory was my highest environmental priority. While in the Senate, I authored legislation to prohibit the disposal of radioactive waste in disposal facilities neither licensed nor designed for such waste. This effort arose out of a series of troubling events during which SSFL operators shipped radioactive waste to a farm in Ventura County as well as several landfills not licensed to receive such waste, shipped contaminated metals to a metal recycler where they ended up in the consumer metal supply, and moved chemically contaminated modular buildings to a school district in San Luis Obispo and a children's zoo in LA County. It should be remembered that in the mid-1990s, SSFL operators pled guilty to felony environmental crimes after charges were brought by the U.S. attorney involving illegal disposal of hazardous wastes, acts which had resulted in the deaths of two workers.

In 2007, I successfully authored SB990, setting forth strict standards for cleanup at the site. Although again the bill had been continuously hard fought by Boeing, it was signed into law by the Governor.

SB990 now governs the cleanup process under the oversight of the Department of Toxic Substances Control. It expressly provides that the site must undergo "complete remediation pursuant to the most protective standards," as specified in the bill. No transfer of any land presently or formerly occupied by the SSFL can occur until the state certifies that it is sufficiently clean.

Presented to the Board
Re: Agenda of 8/04/09
Item # 21

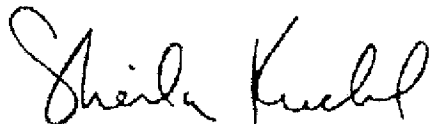
I strongly support the ordinance that is before you this morning. Given the shameful history of activities on this site, including a partial nuclear core meltdown, open pit burning of radioactive waste, dumping of chemical wastes into the soil and groundwater, workers exploding barrels of contaminants with rifle shots, and a long list of other dangerous and reckless acts, there is no question that the site is seriously contaminated. Full characterization of the site has barely begun. I was disappointed and nonplussed to learn that the Regional Board opted not to order a review under CEQA as a precondition to its Interim Source Removal Action plan.

Supervisor Parks is correct in her statement in the Ventura County Star yesterday that the most protective process is through a discretionary permit that is transparent, that allows the community into the process, and that insures that Ventura County clearly controls the screening for contaminants as opposed to relying on the polluter.

While we all agree that we want to clean up this site as quickly as possible, that does not mean with undue haste and improper and rushed review. It is government, as the designated regulators and protectors of public health and safety, that must insure that decisions are made with full information on the nature and extent of the contamination of the soil that will be removed, the conditions under which it will be removed, and clarification as to where the contaminated soil will be taken, given that it is being removed because it is not clean and cannot be certified as clean. I believe that discretionary review is the best way to insure that.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheila Kuehl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SHEILA JAMES KUEHL

Author SB990

Member, Integrated Waste Management Board