CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
FOR THE PG&E TOPOCK COMPRESSOR STATION

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

City Council Chamber
2360 McCulloch Blvd. North
Lake Havasu City, AZ

Monday, June 2, 2008

2:00-5:00 P.M.

Transcribed by
Statewide Transcription Services
On Behalf of
EDAW

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. MATSUMOTO: Thank you for being here and thank you to Lake Havasu City for allowing us to use their Council Chambers. It's a very nice room. My name is Jeanne Matsumoto and I'm a Public Participation Specialist with the Department of Toxic Substances Control. And DTSC, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, is one of the departments within California Environmental Protection Agency and it is the lead regulatory agency for the environmental investigation and clean-up of the Topock Compressor Station. Now, before we get started, we have some handouts. You should have a copy of the presentation, the slides, an agenda, possibly a green meeting evaluation form. If you fill that one out, you leave it on the table as you leave, that helps me in case we can improve this meeting or maybe it's (inaudible). Let me know. There's also a comment form and because this is a small group, we won't be using the comment forms today. If you choose not to make a verbal comment today, that's fine. We understand. Written comments can be accepted all the way up until July 1st. We'll have contact information up on later slides. We understand. I don't always like to stand up and make comments. The reason we're here is DTSC is collecting input for the Environmental

Impact Report for the environmental investigation and clean-up of the Topock Compressor Station. It's our intention to seek input from agencies, tribal government representatives and members, stakeholders, and the public. By input, we're looking for environmental issues you think should be analyzed and possible clean-up alternatives. That's what we're looking for. The input will be used to develop the EIR and comments made today will be addressed in the EIR and we won't be responding to the comments today. So, if you have a comment, when we open it up for comments, if you would stand and give your first name for conversational purposes. We won't be recording your name; it will not be part of the administrative record. We are recording in two different ways. One is a small digital recording will be made and the other is a graphic recording on the wall. We ask that you save your questions until we've actually closed the official comment portion of the meeting and then we'd be happy to stay around and answer whatever questions you may have. The agenda, first will be a brief introduction, followed by the project background, then a description of the EIR process, and comments, why we're here. We'll close the meeting and be happy to answer any questions. Introductions, the

DTSC Team has Watson and Karen, Aaron, the Project Manager who is here today, and myself. We also have, from the office of planning and environmental analysis, Kathie and Bill, and Susan Wilcox, who is not here today. The EDAW Team, EDAW is an independent contractor that's helping develop the EIR. We have Bobbette, Jamie, who's not here today, Leaha, is here, she's working hard back there, and Leslie, who's also working hard, Nancy, and Stev. And at this time, I would like to turn it over to Aaron, the Project Manager.

MR. YUE: Thank you, Jeanne. Well, thank you, ladies and gentleman, for spending your valuable time with us this afternoon. As Jeanne has already mentioned, my name is Aaron Yue. I am actually the Project Manager for Topock Compressor Station project and today, my portion of the presentation is just to provide some information about the project and its background, and also what the investigation has been up to now and also the clean-up process and the project background. The project site is actually located about 15 miles southeast of Needles, California and the area is really considered as having a lot of cultural and spiritual significance to the Native American people. The site is actually also surrounded by land that's

owned and managed by the Department of Interior, specifically managed by the Bureau of Land Management and also a portion of the land is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation and is managed by the Havasu Wildlife Refuge. And this is basically a map showing you where the Topock Compressor Station is in relationship to the I-40 and the Colorado River. It is somewhat of a large scale map. You can't really tell much in great detail in this particular slide, it's also in the handout. But then we do have an aerial photo in the back that you can (inaudible) later after the meeting. The operational history, what has taken place at the site, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has owned and operated the station since 1951 and main operation at the Compressor Station is really to compress the gas that's coming in from Midwest and Southwest area in route to their customers in Northern and Central California. The Compressor Station adds pressure to the pipeline to move the natural gas to Central and Northern California. As the process of adding pressure to the pipeline, heat gets built up. So, they really would require some way of cooling down that gas line. This is an overview of an older aerial photo of what the Compressor Station looked like. Here's the actual compressor engine itself, and these

are the cooling towers used to cool the pipeline. In this particular photo, this is actually a replaced, new cooling tower. What the cooling tower does, as I've mentioned earlier, it's used to cool down the pipeline as the gas is compressed. And as a process of cooling the pipeline, the water gets more saline over time as the water evaporates and gets used up. So, PG&E actually, since 1951 to about 1985, added hexavalent chromium to the cooling water to control corrosion to prevent the equipment from breaking down and to protect the pipeline. And as part of their operation, they have to get rid of some of the spent cooling water and they discharged it and they discharged the spent cooling water to a wash called the Bat Cave Wash. And over time, the hexavalent chromium actually seeped through the soil and into the groundwater. So, currently there is a hexavalent chromium plume that is extending from the dry wash area, the area of discharge, towards the Colorado River. And you really can't see it, the lighting is really bad, but this is actually the projection of the current plume. I'm hoping the handout shows it a little better. This particular aerial photo really shows you a projection of the footprint of the contamination directly in a vertical fashion. If you

look back at this particular photo, you will see that the hexavalent chromium seems to (inaudible) south. What we've found over time and during our investigation, is that the hexavalent chromium, as represented by this green area here, really extends a little beyond the bottom of the river. See that vertical projection? But it is 80 feet below the water, the bottom of the river itself. This area represents the groundwater that's at the site. And so, this is actually a vertical slice, if you will, of this particular area right through here. So, just a portion of what you see is a vertical slice so you can see what it looks like. Let's talk a little bit about the investigation and the clean-up process. Like all regulatory agencies, the Department of Toxic Substances Control is in charge of figuring out really three major factors for the clean-up. One is how bad is the situation, what do we need to do to clean-up the site, and then the third step, finally, is to clean up the site. Under the regulatory jurisdiction, the Department of Toxic Substances Control is cleaning up the site under RCRA authorization for the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. As part of that act, or at least the documentation, comes out of the three different steps. The first step, how bad is it, is

captured under a report we call the RCRA facility investigation report. (Inaudible) volume two which documents the groundwater contamination, is about to be released by PG&E fairly shortly. I think the anticipated date is early July. The second step, how should we clean it up, that falls under the Corrective Measure Study/Feasibility Study, that's produced by the federal (inaudible), and that is anticipated to come out in the near future. It hasn't been put together yet, so we are in the preliminary stage of trying to decide how we should actually clean up the site. And then finally, clean up the site, what we need to do, have the public notice and gathering the public input. The Department will select the final remedy. This slide goes back a little bit about how the situation is at the site. PG&E over time has essentially installed well over 150 groundwater wells and currently they're actively monitoring those wells to determine what the plume boundary is like. At the same time, PG&E is actively also gathering river samples at nine different locations along the river and also taken sediment studies, some samples, and I guess the river water contains sediments and at this point the Department has determined that there is no impact to the Colorado River. At present, the

groundwater investigation is almost complete. We know currently, as we can see in the past diagram, where the (inaudible) is at, we know the extend of the plume. And again, the river water is not impacted by the plume. If you have been to the site or know anything about the site, you'll realize that there is a treatment plant that's currently operating at the Compressor Station. Back in 2004, PG&E installed a well near the Colorado River, approximately 60 or 70 feet away from the river, and detected hexavalent chromium. So, the Department, at that particular point, had instructed and required PG&E to begin extracting some the contaminated groundwater to ensure that the hexavalent chromium does not get into the Colorado River and impact the river itself. And we're pleased to announce that the Department interim measure has been operating and is operating successfully keeping that plume away from the river and up to now, we've demonstrated that there is groundwater (inaudible) that is maintained away from the river, so the water is actually kept away from the river itself. Since 2004, PG&E has extracted approximately 200 million gallons of contaminated groundwater and has recovered over 4,700 pounds of chromium. We've been talking a lot about the water

itself, but what about the soil contamination. There is potential soil contamination at the site. PG&E has identified 29 areas their investigating as part of their overall site investigation. PG&E has also drafted a couple of soil sampling work plans and it's currently being reviewed and is pending approval. Because of the fact that the groundwater is so close to the river, the Department has placed an emphasis on the cleaning up of the groundwater, ahead of the soil. As we can see, a lot of our discussion today, as well as part of the EIR, the focus is mainly on the groundwater. The final groundwater and soil clean-up technologies really will be evaluated in the upcoming documents under the Correct Measure Study and the Feasibility Study and also some of the impact of each one of those technologies will be evaluated in the final impact report, which is the reason why we are here today, is that we're beginning to collect information to draft the EIR. Finally, again, once we have received all the comments from the public after we publish the EIR, The Department of Toxic Substances Control will select a final remedy based on several criteria's and after that we will begin the final remedy. So, at this point, that's it for the background of the site. I will turn the presentation

over to Bobbette.

MS. BIDDULPH: Thank you, Aaron. And what I'm going to do is just talk a little bit about the California Environmental Quality Act and the process that we're basically entering into at this stage, but before I do that, what I really would like to emphasize today is that we're really at the beginning of that process and this meeting is one of the many meetings that we're having to gather input to help us define the scope of the EIR, that's basically the level of the technical studies, what are the questions that we need to answer in the EIR, what are the issues that need to be analyzed. We've been think ourselves, we've been talking to DTSC about what those questions and issues may be, but of course, we need input from agencies and the public, as well the tribes, will help us make sure that we answer all of those questions. Now, as some of you may know, in this case, an Environmental Impact Report is required for the Topock remediation project. An Environmental Impact Report is required by the California Environmental Quality Act. As a public agency, DTSC must prepare an EIR for any project that might have a significant affect on the environment. In this case, as Aaron mentioned, we're going to be looking at the clean-up efforts, the potential

environmental impacts that those clean-up efforts might have for two things, that's both the groundwater and the soils. And as Aaron mentioned, there are going to be alternative approaches to addressing and cleaning up that current contamination, and those alternative approaches, the most feasible alternative approaches, are going to described in the Corrective Measures Study and the Feasibility Study. Now, because we're putting more emphasis on the groundwater water clean-up, there's actually going to be more information known about the how's and the ways in which the groundwater contamination is going to be potentially cleaned up. So, that very specific analysis, the Environmental Impact Report is going to look at those activities related to the groundwater clean-up in a very detailed manner. However, we might not have as much information about the soil clean-up activities because the priority is on the groundwater, so we're going to do the best that we can in this Environmental Impact Report to talk about where the soil contamination may be and also the ways in which that soil contamination will be cleaned up. But there might not be as much known about the details of those clean-up activities and for that reason, this is going to be a Program EIR for that element. What that means

is that we're going to look at those potential impacts in a broad way, but it very well could be that future environmental studies are necessary as we know more specifics about the soil clean-up activities. The term for that is we'll actually tier off of that first Environmental Impact Report to address those more specific items related to the soil. Now, this is just a broad listing of the environmental topics that we anticipate analyzing in the Environmental Impact Report. This is really a laundry list. This environmental analysis is going to be what we call a Full Scope EIR. That means we're going to be addressing everything that we can think of. And obviously one of the things that we're here to hear from you today is, in looking at these categories, what are some of the sensitive issues that we might need to focus on, as well as are there any that that we maybe have missed. In addition to that listing of environmental topics, the California Environmental Quality Act requires us to look at some other facets when analyzing environmental affects. The first on this listing is alternatives to the project. We're basically going to be thinking about whether there are alternative approaches to the clean-up that could result in fewer environmental affects, if an impact is

identified, we'll consider whether or not that impact can be avoided by another alternative and those will be compared in the environmental analysis, so the pros and cons of those different alternatives can be weighed. As well, the document will talk about impacts that have been found to be less than significant, means that they haven't risen to the level of significance and that the mitigation measure isn't necessary. In those cases, we'll describe why impacts aren't considered to be significant substantiation. If we find that impacts where mitigation can't be identified to reduce those impacts to a less than significant level, those will be identified and are known as significant and unavoidable impacts. If those are identified, we'll talk about why mitigation is not possible for that significant impact. As well, the document will summarize significant irreversible changes, things that we can't go back on, as well as growth-inducing impacts. Probably not an issue in this particular project, but we will explore it. Typically growth-inducing is something where you are encouraging growth or population growth or housing growth. So, because this is an environmental clean-up project, likely that's not an issue. But something will potentially

be something that we want to explore further and that we're required to explore further is cumulative impacts. And those are impacts where you're considering not only the affects of this proposed project, as well considering those affects in combination with the affects of planned future projects or projects that might be occurring at the same time of the clean-up activities. As I mentioned before, we're really just starting this process of environmental analysis and considering the different clean-up technologies and those environmental affects. This is kind of a listing of the different sources that we're going to use in order to conduct those investigations. We'll be using published data and reports, input from agencies are very important, as well as the ongoing monitoring efforts that Aaron described pulling data from that. We are going to also be outreaching to tribal members to get input from them on cultural resources and Native American resources. And those studies and that outreach will also be something (inaudible) site-specific resource studies that might be necessary to supplement that existing situation. This is just a pretty washed out graphic but there's one in the back, really it just shows our process and where we anticipate public

meetings and distribution of public materials. The top line here shows facts sheet distribution, the middle line shows public meetings, and we're basically right here at the Notice of Preparation and scoping meetings. The next step at which we will have an opportunity for input after this scoping period is when the draft EIR is completed. We'll be doing another series of meetings and publishing another facts sheet. At the end of that draft EIR circulation period, we'll also be required by law to respond to all the comments that we've received during that public review period, and those comments will help us finalize the EIR, as well as we will prepare responses to those comments in the final EIR. The completion of that documentation process is anticipated in the Spring of 2010. So, we've kind of said this before but I just want to reiterate that the real purpose of today's meeting is to gather input from you on the environmental issues to be studied in the EIR, any questions that should be addressed by that environmental analysis, whether there are thoughts of mitigation measures that may avoid significant impacts or lessen potential environmental affects, as well as alternatives that you view the same. Additionally, because we don't have all of the remediation

technologies perfectly defined at this point, it will be also important to get your questions on the project, project related questions, because that will help us answer the exact nature of remediation technologies and to make sure that we're being clear in that analysis and description of those potential remediation technologies. This slide provides just a summary of the outreach meetings that we're having, like todays; we're in the fourth of five. There is another opportunity after this meeting in Big River and that's this Thursday at 5:00. So, if you know of others that might be interested in coming to a meeting, let them know and they can come. And again, the different ways to provide comments and submit your comments to DTSC and thus to us, is verbally at tonight's meeting, you can do them in writing tonight, provide your comments in writing, or go home or go back to the office and propose those comments and send them into DTSC. But basically, if we could get your comments by July 1st that will ensure that we can input those comments into the consideration of the scope for the EIR. So, with that, I'll turn it over to Jeanne.

MS. MATSUMOTO: If you would like more information about this project, you can contact Aaron or myself. We also have a media contact, Public Information Officer,

Jeanne Garcia. Because of the nature of this project being along the river, we have several repositories. They are listed up there; Needles, Chemehuevi Indian Reservation, the Golden Shores Public Library, the Colorado River Indian Tribes Public Library, and at the Parker Public Library. The official administrative record, which you can also access, is in Cypress, California, Region Four, Department of Toxic Substances Control. One of my favorite ways would be the website. This is kept very current. Documents are uploaded as they occur, so that would be www.dtsc-topock.com. It keeps you informed. It has a nice section on what's new, also a library to access all of these documents. At this time, we would like to open for comments. Anyone?

MALE: I do have one. Do you want me to stand?

MS. MATSUMOTO: First thing, you don't have to stand. I understand.

MALE: It's just a question when Aaron stated about in the last four years the amount of contaminate or chromium that's been recovered I think it was 4,700 pounds?

MR. YUE: Correct, since 2004.

MALE: that's the groundwater? I guess my question would be, in the groundwater and the soils, is there an estimate as to how many pounds may exist?

MR. YUE: We've done the (inaudible) calculation and unfortunately I don't have that off the top of my head. I don't know if Kurt, if you know.

MALE: A good question that's similar to that. One percent, is it a half a percent? Is significant progress being made as far as removing it?

MR. YUE: Since 2004?

MALE: Right. Is that 4,700 pounds a significant number, I guess is my question.

MR. YUE: I think there's still plenty more to go and that's why we're just relying on that interim measure. It would take a long, long time for that.

MALE: If that were the formula, I'm not trying to pin you down, in four years, 4,700 pounds; is it going to be 100 years before it's gone, 50 years, 20 years? Somebody must have made some kind of calculation.

MR. YUE: Yeah, we've made that calculation. It depends on how many volumes of water that you flush through and basically it would be (inaudible).

MS. MATSUMOTO: Yes?

MALE: I've got some questions. I'm not sure how this is supposed to work. I'm the Water Resources Coordinator for the city here and I'm also a Liaison for water quality in the city. We have our own chromium plume as well and I've got a couple questions. One, there's

got to be an average concentration. I know it varies with plumes. What is your biggest concentration that you've found so far in the plume itself?

MR. YUE: Hexavalent concentration is about 1200 ppm, somewhere around there.

MALE: Fifteen ppm.

MALE: Because I want to kind of compare it to our situation here. Second question, as our Water Resources Coordinator, the water that's being popped for remediation purposes, so far (inaudible) ground (inaudible), you said a couple hundred yards down, which is around 580 feet, give or take; that water is allocated, so who is charged for that water allocation (inaudible)? Have you ever thought about that?

MR, YUE: I think PG&E is actually allocating the water, so that's PG&E's allocation of water.

MALE: Must be through the California system them?

MALE: Yes, we got out allocation that was governed by the City of Needles, but it is PG&E's own allocation. It's not part of a Needles allocation, but we inject 92 percent of it back (inaudible).

MALE: After treatment?

MALE: Yes, after treatment. So, our allocation dealt with under that basis.

MALE: Thank you. The types of remediation that you're

thinking about, you're going to be presenting alternatives, I'm assuming. Have you had those outlined at all yet or is that part of what we need to input?

MR YUE: That is in the draft, laid out in the packet. (Inaudible).

MS. MATSUMOTO: Questions? Any more?

MALE: Not right at this moment.

MS. MATSUMOTO: Are there any other comments or questions?

MALE: In that plume, you say that it's kind of stabilized. Is there any anticipation of that movement being in any particular direction or is it stable where it is?

MR. YUE: (Inaudible) stable where it's at. Maybe we can talk a little more about the (inaudible).

MS. MATSUMOTO: Shall I officially close the comments and open it for questions or any other comments?

MALE: It only seems that way because we don't know enough to really make suggestions or comments that would lead you to some place (inaudible). I have a few questions to answer.

MS. MATSUMOTO: Well, let me officially close the comment section and now we're open for questions.

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- MEETING ADJOURNED -

TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that I, Kelli Wells, transcribed the digitally-recorded public meeting of the California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control, dated June 2, 2008; that the pages numbered 1 through 23 constitute said transcript; that the same is a complete and accurate transcription of the aforesaid to the best of my ability.

Dated July 1, 2008.

Kelli Wells, Transcriber
Statewide Transcription Services