



BRAD SHERMAN
UNITED STATES CONGRESS

PH: (202) 225-5911
FAX: (202) 225-5879

November 17, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

The Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) site in Ventura County is immediately adjacent to thousands of my constituents in the San Fernando Valley. The site contains radiological and other contamination, and I have joined other elected officials and community leaders in calling for a full cleanup of the site, which is partially administered by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

In May 2020, the DOE and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) signed a consent order to tear down ten buildings at the SSFL site. This was followed by an Amendment to the Order, which required DOE to remove eight additional contaminated buildings¹.

The removal was ordered out of a particular concern that “the deteriorating buildings have the potential to release contamination that could migrate off site” following fire and rain. In their release announcing the order, DTSC went on to state, “Public safety is our top priority at each stage of the demolition and debris removal process. We continue to follow the safeguards outlined in the 2010 Administrative Order on Consent that protect the health and safety of nearby communities.”

It was therefore concerning to see footage broadcast² on NBC4 in Los Angeles on November 11, 2021 that appears to show the October 1, 2021 demolition of an SSFL site building using explosives that generated a large plume of dust and debris. As noted in the news coverage, there was no evidence of water cannons or dust control measures in the video of the demolition.

On behalf of my constituents, thousands of whom live in close proximity to the SSFL site, I am requesting information about the demolition seen in the video, particularly:

¹ [DTSC orders DOE to remove 8 more buildings at Santa Susana Field Laboratory | Department of Toxic Substances Control \(ca.gov\)](#)

² [Explosion Sends Potentially Radioactive Dust Into LA Air – NBC Los Angeles](#)

- What was the nature of the contamination present in the building demolished?
- What “demolition techniques,” as referenced in the DOE statement to NBC4, were employed to reduce dust and limit contamination spread? Was water used to minimize dust, and if not, why was it not suitable?
- Why was the apparent use of explosives the most appropriate means of demolition considering the potential for a blast to release dust and debris?

The removal of buildings, if handled in a safe manner and with proper disposal, is consistent with the larger effort to fully cleanup the site, an effort that is woefully behind schedule. My constituents and I require confidence that a full cleanup will move forward expeditiously, while always conforming to the highest standards of public safety.

I very much appreciate your attention to this request. If you have any questions, please contact my District Director Scott Abrams at (818) 501-9200 or scott.abrams@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Vice President Kamala Harris