
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT

**DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR REMOVAL ACTION WORK
PLAN AT THE FORMER BERK OIL AND PACIFIC METAL CRAFT SITE,
5614, 5622, AND 5636 SHULL STREET, BELL GARDENS, CALIFORNIA 90201
(SITE CLEANUP PROGRAM NO. 0313, SITE ID NO. 2040193)**

**ON
February 1, 2024**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles (Los Angeles Water Board) has prepared a draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (and associated Initial Study) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for proposed project, *Removal Action Work Plan* (Project). The Project proposes soil excavations at the former Berk Oil and Pacific Metal Craft site, 5614, 5622, and 5636 Shull Street, Bell Gardens, California 90201. The Los Angeles Water Board intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed Project without a public hearing.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The Former Berk Oil and Pacific Metal Craft site (Site) is a 4.3-acre vacant lot, currently owned by the City of Bell Gardens. The Site has been undeveloped and vacant for approximately 30 years. The Site is located in a mixed commercial/industrial and residential area of the City of Bell Gardens, bordered on the north by Shull Street, on the west by an undeveloped pathway and the Interstate 710 freeway (and adjacent to the Los Angeles River), on the south by a Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, and on the east by a mixed commercial/residential area.

While the Site as a whole consists of 4.3-acres, Project activities will only encompass an area approximately the size of 1.2-acre (approximately 50,200 square feet).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed Project involves excavating soil impacted with benzo(a)pyrene and lead at the former Berk Oil and Pacific Metal Craft Site properties located at 5614, 5622, and 5636 Shull Street in Bell Gardens, California.

The Former Berk Oil and Pacific Metal Craft historical operations involved asphalt mixing, oil distribution, and fabrication of metal and plastic components. Additionally, the Site stored diesel, waste oil, degreasers, and asphalt products in above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) and underground storage tanks (USTs). Berk Oil was located on the western portion of the Site and conducted asphalt mixing and oil distribution operations from approximately 1965 through 1989. The eastern portion of the Site had industrial operations involving manufacturing, welding, production of stainless-steel tubing, use of furnaces, degreasers, steam cleaning sump, and fabrication of plastic and metal components from approximately 1955 through the early 1990's.

Post industrial operations, the Site was purchased by the City of Bell Gardens through the former Bell Gardens Redevelopment Agency in 1985 (western portion of Site) and 1992 (eastern portion of Site), with the City's successor agency taking ownership of the Site in 2012. Since the City's purchase, the Site has remained undeveloped and vacant for approximately 30 years.

While under the City of Bell Gardens ownership, periodic environmental investigations and assessment were conducted at the Site throughout the late 1990's and 2000's. The Los Angeles Water Board became the environmental regulatory agency overseeing the Site in the mid-2000's, but due to limited funding available from the City of Bell Gardens, investigative and remedial progress has been minimal. Recently, the Site received funding through an Equitable Community Revitalization Grant (ECRG) from the Department of Toxic Substances Control's Office of Brownfields. The ECRG funding was awarded to the City of Bell Gardens to help fully investigate and clean up the Site for potential beneficial reuse. The ECRG funding is set on a limited time-period of two years, from June 29, 2022 to June 29, 2024.

The Project will remove an estimated 5,000 cubic yards of impacted soil. The excavated soil will be transported and appropriately disposed of off-Site. It is anticipated that Project activities will take approximately two months. During Project activities, safety and compliance measures will be implemented throughout excavation and soil removal events. Additionally, confirmation soil samples will be taken for contingency measures.

DETERMINATION:

The Initial Study describes and evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Project. The Initial Study identifies potentially affected environmental factors for *Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated*, *Less Than Significant Impact*, or *No Impact*. The Los Angeles Water Board recognizes these potential environmental factors and will include in the Project approval mitigation measures designed to avoid or reduce any potential impact to the environment and will also require mitigation monitoring. The proposed Project includes measures designed to avoid or reduce all other potential impacts to the environment. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration is prepared.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:

The draft Mitigated Negative Declaration, draft Initial Study, and other supporting documents (including the Removal Action Work Plan, Cultural Resource Report, and Biological Survey) are available for review at the following locations:

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90013
Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Bell Gardens Library
7110 S Garfield Ave
Bell Gardens, CA 90201
Hours: Sunday – Monday: Closed
Tuesday – Wednesday: 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Thursday – Saturday: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Electronic copies of the documents and all project-related documents and reports, including technical reports on environmental investigations, are available for public review on GeoTracker, the State Water Resources Control Board database: <https://bit.ly/GeoTrackerBerk>

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD:

The draft Mitigated Negative Declaration and draft Initial Study are available for a 30-day public review and comment period, from February 1, 2024, to March 2, 2024. Comments on the adequacy of these documents will be accepted during this period. All interested agencies and persons are invited to submit written comments on these documents. Written comments must be received by the Los Angeles Water Board no later than **5:00pm on March 2, 2024.**

Written comments may be submitted by email to: Jeremy.Barela@waterboards.ca.gov

Written comments may be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
ATTN: Jeremy Barela
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90013

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please direct questions to Mr. Jeremy Barela, Project Manager, at (213) 576-6734 (Jeremy.Barela@waterboard.ca.gov), Ms. Thizar Tintut-Williams, Site Cleanup Unit III Supervisor, at (213) 576-6723 (Thizar.Williams@waterboards.ca.gov), or Ms. Susana Lagudis, Public Participation, Environmental Justice and Tribal Coordinator, at (213) 576-6695 (Susana.Lagudis@waterboards.ca.gov).