



Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control

*The Mission of  
the Department  
of Toxic  
Substances  
Control is to  
provide the  
highest level of  
safety, and to  
protect public  
health and the  
environment  
from toxic harm.*



State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency

## FACT SHEET – May 2008

# PG&E Topock Compressor Station Project Availability of a Notice of Preparation

The *Notice of Preparation* (NOP) is currently available for review and comment. The purpose of the NOP is to solicit guidance from agencies and stakeholders for the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the *Environmental Impact Report* (EIR). The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is the *lead regulatory agency* for the cleanup of the PG&E Topock Compressor Station (referred to as the “Station”). Under the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA), DTSC must evaluate the environmental impacts of a project as part of the approval process. In order to select the most appropriate final cleanup remedy, DTSC will prepare an EIR to document the potential environmental impacts of the action. (*Words in bold and italics appear in the Glossary of Terms.*)



*Project Location*

## Public Scoping Meetings

**Public Comment Period for the NOP runs from May 2 to July 1, 2008.**

For information on accessibility and to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Susan Callery at (818) 717-6567 at least one week before the meeting.

- City of Palm Desert, City Council Chamber, Palm Desert, CA 92260  
Tuesday, May 27, 1:30-4:30
- Gila Ridge High School Auditorium, 7150 E. 24th Street, Yuma, AZ 85365  
Wednesday, May 28, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
- Needles Elks Lodge, 1000 Lillyhill Dr., Needles, CA 92363  
Thursday, May 29, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- City Council Chamber, 2360 McCulloch Blvd. North, Lake Havasu City, AZ  
Monday, June 2, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
- Big River Development Enterprises, 150313 Rio Vista Dr., Big River, CA 92242  
Thursday, June 5, 5:00-7:00p.m.

## Project Background

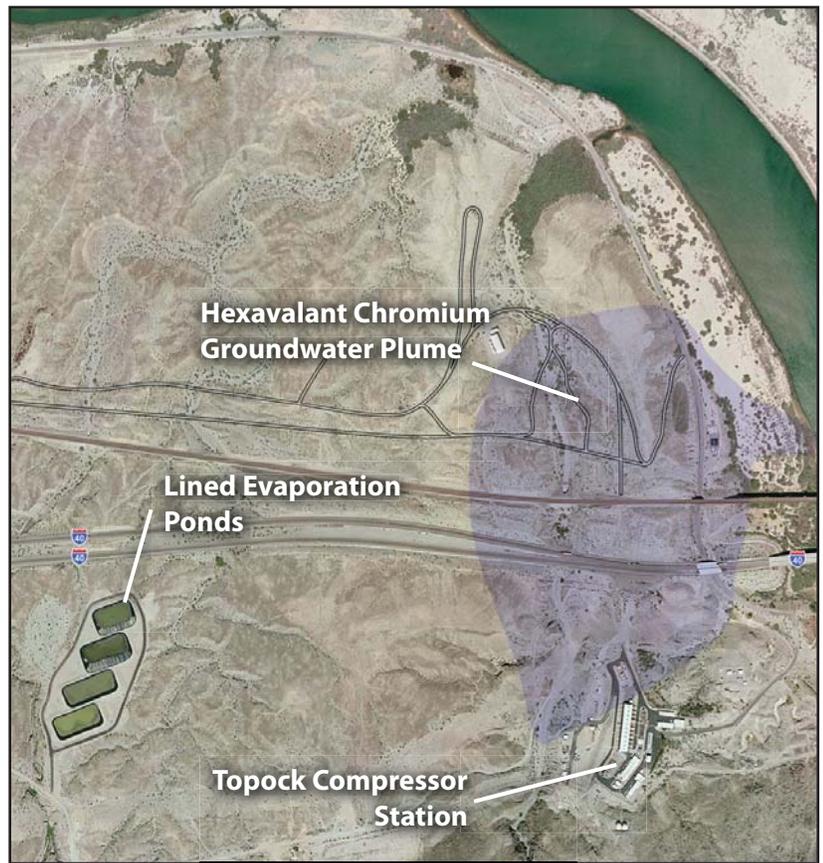
The Station is one-half mile west of the Colorado River and south of Interstate 40 (I-40). The Station is surrounded by federal lands including the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The area has cultural and spiritual significance to Native American people and it is part of their traditional lands.

Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) owns the Station which began operating in 1951. The Station compresses natural gas for transportation through pipelines to PG&E's service territory in central and northern California. From 1951 to 1985, PG&E added chromium to the water in the cooling towers at their facility to prevent corrosion of the cooling tower equipment. During the 1950s and 1960s, untreated wastewater from the cooling towers containing *hexavalent chromium* was released into a streambed adjacent to the site. This streambed is known as the Bat Cave Wash. In 1973, PG&E began treating the wastewater and storing the treated wastewater in evaporation ponds. In 1985, PG&E stopped using chromium and switched to a more environmentally safe additive to control corrosion at the Station. Investigation of the Station began in the 1980s to assess whether the property had been environmentally affected by the waste disposal activities. These investigation activities revealed contamination in soil and *groundwater*.

## Cleanup Program

The first phase in the cleanup process was to assess the extent of the contamination. A formal investigation of soil and groundwater at the Station began in 1987. The investigation activities included the evaluation of soil and groundwater at the Station, and determined the movement of contaminants in groundwater and the threat to the Colorado River. These activities have included:

- collecting samples from groundwater monitoring wells at and around the Station
- collecting samples of sediment from the bottom of the Colorado River
- collecting water samples from the Colorado River



*Topock Compressor Station and Plume*

The investigations show that the affected groundwater, referred to as the “*plume*,” extends northeast from the Station toward the Colorado River, but did not detect any contaminants within the river water. Sampling activities continue on a regular basis and *pilot studies* are being performed to determine the most effective cleanup alternatives for the groundwater beneath the Station.

Under the jurisdiction of DTSC, PG&E also installed and operates a groundwater extraction and treatment system to control the directional flow of groundwater away from the river and to protect the water in the Colorado River.

## The California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA is a state law that requires the lead agency of a project to consider and disclose the environmental effects of its proposed actions before approving them. DTSC has been designated the lead agency for the environmental investigation and cleanup project at the Station. DTSC will prepare an EIR to assess the potential environmental effects of the cleanup alternatives prior to the selection of the final remedy. The final remedy may consist of one or more

technologies to clean up the soil and groundwater contamination.

DTSC and PG&E entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the preparation of the EIR by an independent consultant, EDAW, Inc. (EDAW); however, DTSC retains full control of the content and conclusions in the EIR.

The first step in the EIR process is to prepare an NOP. The subsequent steps required to complete the EIR include the following:

- Hold scoping meetings to obtain input from other agencies with jurisdiction in the project area or over project activities and community members on the scope and content to be evaluated in the EIR
- Prepare a Draft EIR that assesses the potential environmental impacts from the proposed remedies. The Draft EIR will describe existing conditions in the project area, analyze the project's potential effects, and identify measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate adverse impacts from the cleanup program.
- Distribute the Draft EIR for a 60-day public review period and obtain comments from agencies and the public on the content of the Draft EIR.
- Prepare written responses to comments received during the public comment period.
- Prepare and publish the Final EIR
- Certify the EIR and file the *Notice of Determination* (NOD).

### Upcoming Scoping Meetings

A *scoping* meeting is a formal recorded hearing where agencies and community members can present their input on the scope of the EIR for this project. Scoping meetings will be held at times and locations listed on the front page.

Written comments can also be sent to Ms. Jeanne Matsumoto of DTSC for consideration in the EIR scoping process. All comments must be received by DTSC no later than July 1, 2008. Scoping meeting locations and dates also are provided in the NOP.

### Additional Information Sources

DTSC will continue to keep you informed during the EIR process. A notice will be sent to everyone who has

requested notification when the Draft EIR becomes available for review and comment. DTSC anticipates a draft EIR will be available for review during the second quarter of 2010. For general project information, the Topock website is an easy way to access information about the PG&E Topock Compressor Station environmental investigation and cleanup project. You can find the website at: [www.dtsc-topock.com](http://www.dtsc-topock.com). Project information can also be found at DTSC's main website: [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). These websites contain all of the Public Notices and Fact Sheets that have been prepared on the environmental activities at the Station since 1998 and provide a useful overview of the project.

### Who to Contact for Information

For more information on this project, please contact the following DTSC representatives:

**Mr. Aaron Yue**  
**DTSC Project Manager**  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, CA 90630  
(714) 484-5439  
[ayue@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:ayue@dtsc.ca.gov)

**Ms. Jeanne Matsumoto**  
**DTSC Public Participation Specialist**  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, CA 90630  
(714) 484-5338  
Toll Free: (866) 495-5651  
[JMatsumo@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:JMatsumo@dtsc.ca.gov)

For media inquiries, please call:

**Ms. Jeanne Garcia**  
**DTSC Public Information Officer**  
(818) 717-6573  
Email: [JGarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:JGarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov)

TDD: Call 1-888-877-5378, and ask to contact Jeanne Matsumoto at 714-484-5338



**Department of  
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## The Topock Environmental Investigation and Cleanup EIR: A Step by Step Process

SPRING/SUMMER 2008	WINTER 2009/ SPRING 2010	SPRING 2010	SPRING/SUMMER 2010	SUMMER 2010
Notice of Preparation Distribution and Scoping Meetings	Draft EIR Prepared	Public Review of Draft EIR and Receipt of Comments	Preparation of Responses to Comments and Final EIR	Final EIR Certified and Notice of Determination Filed
■	■	■	■	
◆	◆	◆		
✱	✱		✱	✱

Legend	
■	Fact Sheet
◆	Public Meeting
✱	Information Repository

### Glossary of Terms

***California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):***

Enacted in 1970 to provide long-term environmental protection, this law requires that governmental decision-makers and public agencies study the environmental effects of proposed activities, and that significant adverse effects be avoided or reduced where feasible.

***Environmental Impact Report (EIR):*** A report designed to examine the potential environmental impacts of proposed activities.

***Groundwater:*** Water beneath the earth's surface that flows through soil and rock openings.

***Hexavalent Chromium:*** A form of chromium, a metal naturally found in rocks, soil and the tissue of plants and animals. Also used in industrial products and processes.

***Lead Regulatory Agency:*** The public agency responsible for decision making on a project.

***Notice of Determination (NOD):*** Formal notice filed with the California State Clearinghouse after the Final EIR has been certified and a project approved.

***Notice of Preparation (NOP):*** A notice that is sent by the lead agency to notify agencies and the public that an EIR is being prepared and to request input on the content of the EIR.

***Pilot Study:*** A mini version of a full-scale study used to assess the feasibility of a particular cleanup technology in a specific location.

***Plume:*** A body of contaminated groundwater. The movement of a plume in groundwater can be influenced by such factors as local groundwater flow patterns, the character of the aquifer in which the groundwater is contained, and the density of contaminants.

***Scoping:*** A process to gain input from agencies and the public regarding the content of the EIR.

## Information Repository Locations

Project Reports, fact sheets, and other project documents can be found in the Information Repositories listed below:

On the World-Wide Web at:  
www.dtsc-topock.com

### Needles Public Library

1111 Bailey Avenue  
Needles, CA 92363  
Kristin Mouton: 760-326-9255

### Chemehuevi Indian Reservation

2000 Chemehuevi Trail  
Havasu Lake, CA 92363  
Gilbert Para: 760-858-1140

### Golden Shores/Topock Library Station

13136 Golden Shores Parkway  
Topock, AZ 86436  
Avis McKinnon: 928-768-2235

### Lake Havasu City Library

1770 McCulloch Blvd.  
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403  
Audrey LaComarre: 928-453-0718

### Colorado River Indian Tribes Public Library

2nd Avenue and Mojave Road  
Parker, AZ 85344  
Amelia Flores: 928-669-1285

### Parker Public Library

1001 Navajo Avenue  
Parker, AZ 85344  
Jana Ponce: 928-669-2622

### Department of Toxic Substances Control

5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, CA 90630  
Julie Johnson: 714-484-5337  
9am-Noon, 1pm-4pm, Monday –Friday  
Please call for an appointment



## Comment and Mailing List Form for PG&E's Topock Compressor Station

If you have any comments concerning the Notice of Preparation, please fill out the information below and mail in by **July 1, 2008**.

Comments (attach additional pages as needed)

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If you would like to be added to or taken off the distribution list for mail related to the site, please fill out this form and return to DTSC.

REMOVE me from the mailing list

ADD me to the mailing list

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please address all mailings to Aaron Yue, Project Manager, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 5796 Corporate Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630, or by email to AYue@dtsc.ca.gov.

*Our mailing lists are only used for keeping you informed of our activities. We do not routinely release our mailing lists to outside parties. However, they are considered public records and, if requested, may be subject to release.*