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### **ATSDR ANNOUNCES PUBLIC AVAILABILITY SESSIONS**

**(ATLANTA)** -- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), a public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is planning public availability sessions in the Pasadena, California, area to gather community health concerns regarding the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) Site.

ATSDR is preparing a Public Health Assessment regarding public health issues near the JPL and is gathering additional information on the site. Public health assessments report information about hazardous substances in the environment and evaluate whether exposure to those substances in the past, present or future could harm people in the area. The public health assessments help identify additional environmental sampling needed or other activities that might be needed to support public health-protecting recommendations made to other government agencies, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and state and local health and environmental departments. Public health assessments rely on three sources of information: environmental data, health data, and reports of community concerns.

ATSDR will hold four informal, one-on-one public availability sessions to learn about any new health or environmental concerns that area residents have regarding the JPL site.

The first meetings will be held on **Tuesday, December 2, 1997, from 10 am - 2 pm and 4 pm - 7 pm**, at the following locations:

The Pasadena Holiday Inn  
The Aspen Room  
303 E. Cordova  
Pasadena, CA  
(818) 449-4000

- more -

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The additional meetings will be held on **Wednesday, December 3, 1997, from 10 am - 2 pm and 4 pm - 7 pm**, at the following location:

La Canada-Flintridge Library  
4545 Oakwood Avenue  
La Canada, CA  
(818) 790-3330

Public availability sessions are not intended to be large-scale meetings. Instead, community members can drop in at any time during a session and meet one-on-one with ATSDR staff to discuss health and site concerns. Attendance is open to the public, although individual conversations with ATSDR staff will be confidential.

Community members who cannot attend either session may call Mark Weber, ATSDR Health Assessor, in Atlanta at (404) 639-6043; Linda West, ATSDR Community Involvement Specialist, in Atlanta at (404) 639-0649; or Dan Strausbaugh, ATSDR's Regional Representative, in San Francisco at (415) 744-1774.

**Members of the press are requested to make an appointment to interview ATSDR staff. To request an appointment, telephone Donna Garland, ATSDR Office of Policy and External Affairs at (404) 639-0501.**

**JPL.NASA**

1. **KCBS-TV (2) (CBS)**  
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**Los Angeles, CA 90028**  
**(213) 460-3000**  
**(213) 460-3733 Fax**
  
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**3000 Alameda Avenue**  
**Burbank, CA 91523**  
**(818) 840-4321**  
**(818) 840-4434 Fax**
  
3. **KTLA-TV (5)**  
**Health Editor - Larry McCormick**  
**5800 Sunset Boulevard**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90028-6600**  
**(213) 460-5500**  
**(213) 460-5952 Fax**
  
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**General Manager - Alan Nesbitt**  
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**Los Angeles, CA 90027**  
**(213) 644-7777**  
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**Public Affairs Director - Martin Quiroz**  
**5515 Melrose Avenue**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90038-3149**  
**(213) 960-3687**  
**(213) 460-6265 Fax**

- 6. KTTV-TV (11) (FOX)**  
**Assignment Editor - Carol Breshears**  
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**Los Angeles, CA 90028-8588**  
**(213) 462-7111**  
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**(213) 850-6197 Fax**
- 8. KFWB-AM Radio**  
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**6230 Yucca Street**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90028-5217**  
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**(213) 871-4670 Fax**
- 9. The Pasadena Star-News**  
**Managing Editor - Lawrence Wilson**  
**911 E. Colorado Blvd.**  
**Pasadena, CA 91109**  
**(818) 578-6300**  
**(818) 792-9413 Fax**
- 10. Glendale News-Press**  
**News Editor - Warren Swil**  
**425 W. Broadway**  
**Suite 300**  
**Glendale, CA 91204-1269**  
**(818) 241-4141**  
**(818) 548-8897, 243-5944?**

**11. Pasadena Weekly**  
**Managing Editor - Bill Evans**  
**50 S. DeLacey Avenue**  
**Suite 200**  
**Pasadena, CA 91105-1904**  
**(818) 584-1500**  
**(818) 795-0149Fax**

**12. La Canada Valley Sun**  
**Editor - Gerald Bean**  
**1 Valley Sun Lane**  
**La Canada, CA 91011**  
**(818) 790-8774**  
**(818) 790-5690**

**13. Foothill Leader**  
**Po Box 963**  
**Montrose, CA 91020**  
**(818) 249-8090**

## **Community Invited to Informal Public Availability Sessions**

Representatives from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) recently visited Pasadena and the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab to begin the public health assessment process and begin to evaluate available environmental sampling data. As part of that analysis process, ATSDR gathers and evaluates site-related community health concerns and questions. To help with this process, ATSDR is sponsoring public availability sessions at the following locations:

Sessions will be held at the following locations:

### **Tuesday, December 2, 1997**

10am - 2pm and 4pm - 7pm

#### **The Pasadena Holiday Inn**

The Aspen Room

303 E. Cordova

Pasadena, CA

(818) 449-4000

### **Wednesday, December 3, 1997**

10am - 2pm and 4pm - 7pm

#### **La Canada-Flintridge Library**

4545 Oakwood Avenue

La Canada, CA

(818) 790-3330

Public availability sessions are not intended to be large-scale meetings. Instead, community members can drop in at any time during the sessions and meet one-one-one with ATSDR staff to discuss health and site concerns. Conversations with ATSDR staff will be confidential. Those wanting additional confidentiality should contact the ATSDR staff listed later in this article to discuss their concerns by phone.

The final report, a public health assessment, reviews available information about hazardous substances at a site and evaluates whether exposure to them might cause any harm to people. The ATSDR conducts a public health assessment on every site on/or proposed for the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), including the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab. The NPL is a list generated by the Environmental Protection Agency for environmental sites that need cleanup actions across the nation.

Public health assessments consider the following:

- 1) what the levels (or "concentrations") of hazardous substances are;
- 2) whether and how people might be exposed to contamination through "exposure pathways" such as breathing air, drinking or contacting water, contacting or eating soil, or eating food;
- 3) what harm the hazardous substances might cause to people (or the contaminant's toxicity);
- 4) whether working or living nearby might affect people's health; and
- 5) other dangers to people such as unsafe buildings, abandoned mine shafts, or other

physical hazards.

The ATSDR is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. It is a federal public health agency that was created by Superfund legislation in 1980. The ATSDR's mission is to prevent exposure and adverse human health effects and diminished quality of life associated with exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites, unplanned releases, and other sources of pollution in the environment. One of ATSDR's roles is to advise federal, state, and local agencies on actions to prevent or reduce people's exposure to hazardous substances. It is very important to note that ATSDR is an advisory, non-regulatory public health agency, so ATSDR does not have the authority such as EPA to close down plants.

Prior to release of the final report, ATSDR will ensure copies of a public comment draft are available for public review at several public locations. ATSDR will let the community know the address and phone number of those locations, as well as the public comment period dates. Copies of the draft public health assessment will also be mailed to interested community members who have requested a copy. The public will have 45 days to review and comment on the draft public health assessment.

If you would like to talk with ATSDR representatives about the public health assessment process, or if you can't attend one of the public availability sessions and would like to talk to an ATSDR staff member, please call 1-800-447-1544 in Atlanta, Georgia, between 9 am and 5 pm to leave a message with the person answering the phone. Please give that person your name, telephone number including area code, and the best times to reach you. Please also say you are calling about the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab, and ask to speak with one of the staff working on this assessment: Dr. W. Mark Weber (Health Assessor) in Atlanta; Ms. Linda West (Community Involvement Specialist) in Atlanta, or Bill Deviny (ASTDR Regional Representative) in San Francisco.