

MOTION HEALTH, EDUCATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Hexavalent Chromium, also known as or Cr(VI), is a carcinogenic air or water-based toxic chemical that gained notoriety in the 1990s when Hinkley, CA, a small farming community in the Mojave Desert, learned that it's groundwater was polluted with Hexavalent Chromium, a cancer-causing heavy metal. Hexavalent Chromium had seeped into the water after being dumped into unlined ponds at Pacific Gas & Electric's compressor station in the 1950s and '60s – the event was further publicized in the film Erin Brokovich. According to CalEPA's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, one form of Hexavalent Chromium, chromic acid, is created as a mist during electroplating when workers and bystanders may inhale the mist. Chromic acid can also be absorbed through the skin. Breathing or drinking Hexavalent Chromium for years or decades can increase the risk of lung and nose cancers.

On November 4, 2016, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) reported to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health that air monitors had detected excessive levels of Chromium-6 in Paramount, CA. The LA County Department of Public Health, LA County Fire Department's Health Hazardous Material Division, the City of Paramount, and SCAQMD began a joint investigation to identify the sources. SCAQMD issued Abatement Orders and Public Health Directives instructing two aerospace manufacturing firms to take all the steps necessary to eliminate the current nuisance endangering public health. SCAQMD has found metal plating facilities in Paramount where emitting levels of Hexavalent Chromium have been up to 350 times the allowable limits.

On May 5, 2017, SCAQMD announced the launch of a special air monitoring initiative to sample for Hexavalent Chromium in the Compton area. SCAQMD looked at areas that had concentrations of the chromium plating and anodizing facilities, with a particular focus on areas that had concentrations near homes, schools, senior centers and other businesses. Due to this analysis, Compton was selected as the next community to deploy special air monitoring efforts. At a town hall on August 2, 2017, it was reported that elevated levels of the carcinogen known as Hexavalent Chromium were found near several metal finishing businesses in Compton after a nearly two month investigation by SCAQMD air quality officials.

On the July 21, 2017 SCAQMD issued a petition for an Order for Abatement against a metal finishing facility in Long Beach, CA. The order stated the site was emitting the carcinogenic air toxin, Hexavalent Chromium, at 18 times the normal air background levels. Currently the City of Long Beach's Fire Department, Health Department, Building and Safety Department and AQMD are conducting joint inspections to identify other potential sources of elevated levels of Hexavalent Chromium.

SCAQMD, the agency responsible for monitoring air pollution in much of Southern California has detected excessive levels of Chromium-6 in the neighboring Los Angeles cities of Paramount, Compton, and Long Beach. On April 12, 2017, SCAQMD requested a list of metal manufacturing, metal heat treating, metal cutting, metal forging, metal extruding, metal cooling, metal plating and metal spray coating facilities in the City of Los Angeles. In reporting back, the CAO's Office identified up to 21,000 metal processing sites in the City of Los Angeles that could be potential sources of Hexavalent Chromium.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Sanitation be instructed, with assistance from the Department of Building and Safety, the Los Angeles Fire Department, the City Administrative Officer, and the Los Angeles City Health Commission, to work with the South Coast Air Quality Management District and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to report back within 30 days with an extensive update on the priority ranking of the potential sites that could have excessive levels of Chromium-6, a plan for joint inspections of these sites, an analysis of potential environmental justice impacts on Los Angeles communities, and a written update on ways to reduce the potential health effects to Los Angeles residents.

PRESENTED BY

DAVID E. RYU

Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY

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