



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

September 27, 2016

Mr. Angelo Bellomo  
Deputy Director for Health Protection  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
5050 Commerce Drive  
Baldwin Park, CA 91706

Re: Initiation of Cleanup of the Panda International Trading Industrial Site

Dear Angelo:

This letter summarizes actions that the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 ('EPA') plans to initiate in October 2016, at the Panda International Trading ('PIT') industrial site ('the Site'), located at 3570 Fruitland Avenue, Maywood, CA. EPA looks forward to continuing our productive and mutually beneficial relationship with your Department, as we move from the emergency response phase of cleaning up residences and common areas surrounding the PIT facility to the cleanup of the Site itself.

Since there are a number of state and local agencies which have both an interest and a role in implementing a successful and comprehensive cleanup, we wanted to outline EPA's plan to address the hazardous substances at the Site. As you know, the owner of the PIT facility recently pled guilty to multiple felony violations of California's Hazardous Waste Control laws. Although EPA has not done a complete assessment, we are reasonably certain that the Site contains both hazardous and non-hazardous materials. For that reason EPA intends to work closely with those state and local agencies that might be able to provide resources to address the *non-hazardous* component of the cleanup, so that the end result is a comprehensive cleanup that protects human health and the environment. Cleanup of non-hazardous substances (ie solid waste or recyclable material) is outside the jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act ('CERCLA' or 'Superfund'), EPA's main statutory authority for this cleanup.

For the hazardous substances at the Site, EPA will use the standard approach for CERCLA removal actions that we have been using at hazardous waste sites for more than 30 years. EPA's policy is to first require responsible parties to conduct cleanups under EPA oversight. If a responsible party is unwilling or unable to conduct the cleanup safely and consistent with federal standards, EPA is prepared to mitigate the hazardous substances at the site using federal funds. We estimate that removal of the hazardous substances from the Site will take 8 weeks. An EPA federal on-scene coordinator (FOSC) will manage the cleanup, assisted by a team of regional EPA personnel, including a community involvement coordinator, media and governmental affairs specialists, an attorney and technical assessment and cleanup contractors. We plan to provide regular progress updates to your Department and the LA County FD Health

Hazardous Materials Division, so that you can communicate that progress to your stakeholders. Enclosed with this letter is a summary that describes EPA's cleanup plan for the Site. EPA looks forward to working closely with the LA County Department of Health (DPH), particularly to leverage your Department's expertise with public health messaging and your strong community relationships. EPA is committed to keeping the community around the Site well informed. A successful cleanup correlates strongly with a well-informed community and EPA would like to work with DPH to accomplish that goal. To that end, we would like to meet with your staff prior to our mobilization to the Site, so we can discuss how best to keep the community informed of Site cleanup progress.

Please do not hesitate to call or email if you have any questions. I can be reached at (415) 972-3132 or at [meer.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:meer.daniel@epa.gov).

Best Regards,



Daniel Meer, Assistant Director  
Superfund Division.

Enclosure

cc: Grant Cope, California Environmental Protection Agency  
Wes Mindermann, Cal/Recycle  
Raymond LeClerc, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Cal/EPA  
Chief Bill Jones, LA County Fire Department, Health Hazardous Materials Division  
Jill Whynot, Chief Operating Officer, South Coast Air Quality Management District



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**Fruitland Magnesium Fire Site  
Summary Plan for the Cleanup of Hazardous Substances  
September 28, 2016**

This plan summarizes steps that the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 ('EPA') is planning, to address hazardous substances at the site of Panda Trading International, located at 3570 Fruitland Avenue, Maywood, California. On June 14, 2016 a fire on the PIT property destroyed the PIT facility (a scrap metal yard) and Skoor Metals, a precious metals recovery facility operating on the PIT property.

- 1. Closeout of the Emergency Response Phase of the Incident:** The distribution of the resident information packages will delineate the end of the emergency response-phase activities and the effective demobilization of the Unified Command.

**2. Site Cleanup Strategy**

EPA is currently pursuing an enforcement strategy through Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act ('CERCLA' or more commonly 'Superfund') Section 104(e) information requests to determine the property owner/operators' ability to pay cleanup costs. EPA is also planning to perfect a lien on the Panda International Trading (PIT) property at 3570 Fruitland Avenue, Maywood, CA ('the Site'). EPA anticipates that the property owner/operator(s) will not have the financial resources to complete the cleanup of hazardous substances at the Site. Concurrently, EPA is preparing to fund a cleanup of hazardous substances at the Site using CERCLA removal authority. In addition, EPA has approached California agencies (Cal/EPA, CalRecycle and others) to assist in the cleanup. CalRecycle has the authority to address solid wastes at co-disposal sites. Discussions regarding state-level contribution to solid waste transportation and disposal are ongoing with state agencies.

**3. Community and Inter-Governmental Engagement**

EPA will coordinate public messaging, messaging to elected officials and community involvement (CI) during the CERCLA removal action. As a first step in this coordination, EPA will prepare a community involvement strategy that will include a component of regular communication with LA County Department of Public Health (DPH) staff. Similarly, EPA will coordinate outreach to local and state government officials and the press. A "next steps" fact sheet describing the removal action planning will be prepared for community-wide distribution, immediately following the distribution of resident information packages.

**4. EPA will initiate and lead a CERCLA Removal Action at the Site**

Cleanup of hazardous substances at the Site should begin in October 2016 and take approximately 8 weeks to complete. The EPA federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) will be the

lead EPA official for this fund-lead removal action. Other state or local agencies with a role (for example, CalRecycle, Cal/EPA, DTSC, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Los Angeles County FD Health Hazardous Materials Division) will be expected to coordinate their activities with the EPA team (FOSC, public information specialist, community involvement coordinator, attorney)

**Initial Actions:** Initial actions at the Site will be to stabilize the existing roof structure above the loading dock area and to construct a debris barrier along the property border with the residential properties to the south. (The structural engineering evaluation performed during the emergency response phase determined that the roof structure was unsafe and a demolition plan was commissioned. Subsequently, the structural engineer revised the initial determination and has recommended that shoring of the structure at one corner will create safe working conditions.) This is preferable to demolition from a cost/time savings perspective and also because the roof demolition would need likely need to be performed prior to the removal of debris and contaminated ash/soil, which could result in unacceptable particulate dust generation. The construction of a debris barrier along the southern property border is intended to mitigate potential debris/particulate migration onto the residential properties and to minimize disruption to the residents from visual/noise impacts of removal operations. Further, EPA will institute strict dust control measures and an air monitoring/sampling program, with an emphasis on real-time dust monitoring, to ensure that removal activities do not create health risks for residents in the surrounding area.

**Phase I:** The first phase of removal activities will consist of solid waste/building debris removal in collaboration with CalRecycle. EPA will containerize, transport and dispose any debris classified as hazardous waste. As areas of the property are cleared of waste, additional assessment of the surface/subsurface soils will be conducted to more fully characterize the extent of soil contamination.

**Phase II:** The second phase of activities will be to remove contaminated ash/soils. Cleanup goals for the site will be based on the removal screening levels (RSLs) for Industrial Soils (developed in consultation with an EPA Region 9 Toxicologist) or 3 feet below ground surface (bgs) maximum excavation depth. Confirmation sampling will be conducted to document achievement of the cleanup goals and/or any contamination that remains at the 3 foot bgs maximum excavation depth.

## 5. Site Close Out

The cleanup of hazardous substances will complete the EPA-lead CERCLA removal action at the PIT industrial site. EPA would then demobilize from the site after informing the local community that the hazardous substance cleanup is complete. Other cleanup activities, if required, should be pursued through local or state enforcement programs. For example, concerns about groundwater contamination should be addressed to Cal/EPA through the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Concerns about nuisance odors should be directed to the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Discussions about potential application of other state authorities for long-term cleanup can be directed to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control ('DTSC').