



A Division of the Ventura County Health Care Agency

**BARRY R. FISHER, MPPA**  
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**ROBERT M. LEVIN, M.D.**  
Health Officer / Medical Director

July 14, 2009

Mary Ann Lutz  
Chair, California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Los Angeles Region  
320 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Los Angeles, California 90013

Dear Ms. Lutz;

We are in receipt of your letter dated June 7, 2009.

In your letter you ask that we "consider conducting a community health assessment of those who live adjacent to the Santa Susana Field Laboratory". We have in the past reviewed studies and formed conclusions about them, but we are unaccustomed to performing community health assessments. It is our understanding that health-related issues related to drinking water and contaminants are variously the responsibility of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the California Drinking Water and Environmental Management Division. In general, most local health departments, including Ventura County's, do not do these kinds of surveys due to factors including a lack of staffing, experience, funding and/or expertise.

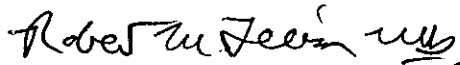
We have, however, examined the available studies and feel they indicate that valid concerns exist regarding contaminants from the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site entering groundwater and perhaps being distributed in the atmosphere. After this review and careful consideration of your request, we have concluded that further studies are unlikely to add to the currently available information. It should be noted that epidemiological researchers recognize that it is frequently difficult or impossible to prove a relationship between local health problems and specific environmental contaminants.

Should you, in spite of our conclusion, choose to study this matter further, we will be supportive to the extent feasible of any efforts put forward by an appropriate agency you identify to perform this work.

The steps that appear appropriate to address current ongoing health concerns include:

- Testing of all wells that might be affected by any of the Santa Susana contaminants *for* these contaminants, and the closing down of any affected wells as may be necessary
- Cleaning up contaminants in accordance with a documented plan approved by a responsible agency (apparently the California Department of Toxic Substances Control)
- Medical screening by their physician of those who are concerned they may have been affected by environmental contaminants. This screening should be based upon well-accepted standards such as those recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ([www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov](http://www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov)).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Levin" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert M. Levin, MD  
Health Officer  
Ventura County

Cc: Sandy McNeel, DVM  
Michael Lipsett, MD  
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