



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 15, 2014

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EPA Supports Environmental Test Program and Does Not Recommend More Testing, As All Buildings Are Re-Opened for Start of School

MALIBU, Calif. – As the first day of school approaches, EPA officials issued a letter dated August 14th formally validating the District’s environmental testing program, noting that, “The District is meeting EPA national guidelines to protect public health from PCBs in schools by addressing the human exposure pathways of greatest concern, namely air, dust and soil.”

The letter also addressed questions from District officials about the need for additional testing, especially in light of recent offers by celebrity parents to pay for the testing. “EPA does not recommend additional testing of caulk unless dust or air samples persistently fail to meet EPA’s health-based guidelines.” The letter also noted, “The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) does not require schools or building owners to test caulk for PCBs.”

To date, results for the District’s intensive environmental testing program conducted over the summer have found that Malibu High and Juan Cabrillo Elementary buildings are safe for students and staff. That determination is based on EPA benchmarks. Air and dust samples have consistently shown PCB levels that are either not detected or well below EPA health benchmarks. The District has not re-opened two rooms – a woodshop room and the psychologist’s office – where PCB levels in dust samples exceeded EPA benchmarks. SMMUSD is working, in coordination with the EPA, to clean and re-test those three rooms.

EPA officials also formally concurred with, and agreed to provide oversight of, the District’s plan to remove caulk identified above regulatory thresholds and light fixtures previously found to contain PCBs, even though dust and air samples have not indicated a health risk. The District submitted to EPA a voluntary proposal that will remove the caulk from four locations at MHS by June 30, 2015. These locations previously tested above 50 ppm. The District will also take out light fixtures associated with previously removed PCB-containing ballasts at MHS and Juan Cabrillo Elementary (JCES), within a year. This work will ensure the District remains in compliance with TSCA.

To make certain the buildings continue to be safe, additional data will be collected around the school’s winter break in the 2014/2015 school year, and at the end of the 2015 school year, prior

to the next annual summer cleaning. These data, along with data from this summer, will aid in determining future monitoring recommendations.

As a result of the scientific process, the District has re-opened all buildings on both campuses, with the exception of the two rooms previously noted, allowing teachers to prepare their classrooms for the start of school. Testing results for each building can be found by clicking the appropriate link/building name.

August 14 – [Malibu High School, Woodshop Building \(Building G\)](#)

August 13 – [Malibu High School, Classroom Building D](#)

August 13 – [Juan Cabrillo Elementary, Classrooms Buildings D & E/Library \(Building F\)](#)

August 11 – [Malibu High School, Media & Graphic Arts Building \(Building I\)](#)

August 11 – [Juan Cabrillo Elementary, Classroom Building C](#)

August 8 -- [Malibu High School, Music Building \(Building F\)](#)

August 6 -- [Juan Cabrillo Elementary, Administration & Classroom Buildings \(Building A & B\)](#)

August 5 -- [Malibu Middle School, Classroom/Blue Shark Building \(Building E\)](#)

August 4 -- [Malibu High School, Cafeteria/Auditorium \(Building H\)](#)

July 28 -- [Malibu High School, Administration \(Building B/C\)](#)

July 28 -- [Malibu High School, Library \(Building A\)](#)

July 18 -- [Malibu High School, Old Gym \(Building J\)](#)

For additional information about ENVIRON's work with the school district, including weekly reports it provides, please click [here](#).

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

**75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 95105-3901**

**OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

AUG 14 2014

Ms. Sandra Lyon, Superintendent
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
1651 Sixteenth Street
Santa Monica, California 90404

Dear Ms. Lyon:

This letter provides EPA's assessment of the work performed this summer by the Santa Monica-Malibu School District to address PCBs at Malibu schools. It also confirms the District's plans to remove PCB-containing caulk that it found to be above regulatory thresholds at Malibu High School.

The District followed EPA's recommendation to conduct inspections and initiate best management cleaning practices at Malibu High School, and your District elected to include Juan Cabrillo Elementary School in this work. The District also proposed collecting air and wipe samples at both schools. On June 9, 2014, your contractor, ENVIRON, sent EPA an air and wipe testing plan. EPA provided comments and concurred on the revised plan dated June 13, 2014. In addition, EPA staff were on site in June at Malibu High School to observe the inspection and testing work. Based on EPA's evaluation of the work conducted this summer, the Agency has determined that the work was consistent with EPA's national guidance.

The work undertaken by the District focused on the human exposure pathways of greatest concern for school environments, specifically air, dust and soil, to make sure that those pathways have been effectively addressed. As you are aware, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control is the lead agency for soil investigations. All recent air samples but one (Room 303 in Building F at the high school) have shown PCB concentrations below EPA's national public health guidelines for PCBs, and we have been informed your District is now taking steps to address the possible causes of higher air levels in that room. Recent tests of dust levels were below our health-based screening level in all rooms except: Room 303 in Building F at the high school; Room 506 in Building G at the high school; and Room 6 in Building C at the elementary school. EPA understands additional cleaning is being performed in those three rooms.

The air and dust sampling results serve as the basis for appropriate decisions by the District as the school opens for the Fall semester next week, including allowing staff and students access to those classrooms that have been shown to meet EPA's health-based guidelines. EPA understands the District has decided that these rooms will not be occupied until they meet EPA's protective dust and air guidelines.

The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) does not require schools or building owners to test caulk for PCBs. However, in 2013 the District voluntarily tested window caulk at Malibu High School and found four samples above the TSCA regulatory threshold of 50 ppm. On August 14, 2014, the District

submitted to EPA revisions to their Malibu High School Plan to address caulk known to contain PCBs above 50 ppm. I want to acknowledge the District's plan to remove the caulk from these four windows by June 30, 2015. In addition, within one year, the District will replace light fixtures at both schools stained by leaks from previously removed PCB-containing ballasts.

EPA concurs with this approach, and we will coordinate with you on abatement activities that require EPA approval under TSCA. EPA does not recommend additional testing of caulk unless dust or air samples persistently fail to meet EPA's health-based guidelines.

In summary, the District is meeting EPA national guidelines to protect public health from PCBs in schools by addressing the human exposure pathways of greatest concern, namely air, dust and soil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jared Blumenfeld", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jared Blumenfeld

cc: Miriam Ingenito, Acting Director, DTSC