

Update: Waste Management's Kettleman Hills Hazardous Waste Treatment and Disposal Facility.

For the past thirty years, Waste Management's Kettleman Hills Facility (KHF) has provided safe waste treatment and disposal services to thousands of California businesses and public agencies. KHF is one of the most highly regulated sites in California, and operates under the most stringent regulatory standards in the nation.

Approximately 88 percent of all wastes received at KHF are considered hazardous *only under California's unique waste characterization regulations*, and are not classified as "hazardous" under the federal RCRA program. Many of these wastes are generated by the California Department of Transportation, local redevelopment agencies, and through privately funded remediation projects.

The State of California recently initiated a public health survey and an environmental exposure assessment to respond to concerns that there may be an elevated level of birth defects in Kettleman City. Cal-EPA scientists are looking in the Kettleman City area for chemicals associated with agricultural operations, groundwater contamination from naturally occurring arsenic and benzene, illegal disposal activities, and various petroleum sources. Although Waste Management's KHF is located 3.5 miles from the Kettleman City community, Cal-EPA plans to perform additional air sampling at the facility.

Waste Management understands the importance of government efforts to address the community concerns in Kettleman City, and we are supportive of comprehensive new environmental monitoring efforts. We are confident that this additional monitoring will confirm that KHF poses no risk to human health or the environment. State agencies have previously determined that the groundwater beneath the facility is isolated hydraulically from the groundwater located under Kettleman City. Very extensive air monitoring, risk assessments, and health studies performed over the past twenty years have also consistently shown no potential health or environmental impacts from the facility.

Most recently, WM has completed an extensive PCB Congeners Study. The purpose of this study was to assess the presence of multiple PCB congeners in soil, air and vegetation at the perimeter of the KHF. The study characterizes and quantifies the potential human and ecological risks that may be posed by the management, storage and disposal of PCB wastes at the facility.

This study was designed in full accordance with EPA protocols and requirements for sampling and analysis. The data collected from this study has been evaluated in a draft Ecological Risk Assessment that was submitted to EPA for review on March 12, 2010 and was used to prepare a Human Health Risk Assessment that was submitted to EPA on April 6, 2010. The results of these draft reports indicated the potential exposures do **not** pose risks above regulatory risk levels for either ecological receptors or human health. EPA is currently conducting a peer review process for both reports.

Previous to the PCB Congener Study, several years of ongoing ambient air monitoring at the KHF and various health risk assessments show the risk to the nearest residential location and Kettleman City to be **30 to 500 times lower** than the target risk levels established by Cal-EPA and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Summaries of the various air monitoring results, health assessments, and epidemiological studies can be provided upon request.

We are disappointed and frustrated that virtually all of the media coverage regarding health concerns in Kettleman City and potential links to our KHF has failed to (1) report on the findings of extensive environmental monitoring and independent health studies that have been produced over the past two decades; (2) recognize the extraordinary efforts WM has made to work with both U.S. EPA and Cal-EPA to document the safety of our facility; and (3) acknowledge the importance of the KHF in providing safe and reliable services to more than 8,000 public and private customers each year and providing the infrastructure needed for critical community cleanup and infrastructure projects throughout California.

Waste Management takes community concerns very seriously, and we endeavor to be an active contributor to community health and well-being. WM's 2008 sustainability report outlined our many partnerships with community groups as well as our extensive efforts to go beyond compliance to exceed regulatory standards for protection of health and the environment. See pp. 38-39, 45-46, 18-21, 23-27, http://www.wm.com/wm/WM_SRR_2008.pdf.