

Department of Toxic Substances Control 2023 Objectives and Priorities

April 2023: These Objectives and Priorities were revised to include a Public Engagement Objective and supporting priorities.



2023 Director's Priorities

Objective 1: Environmental Justice/Equity

To address the harmful impacts inequity has had on the most vulnerable communities in California, in 2023 DTSC will build on its prior efforts to incorporate equity and environmental justice principles into its programs and services. We will enhance our organizational culture to ensure it reflects the vibrant and diverse communities we serve and strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. We will increase our efforts in service to those most impacted by inequity through a stronger enforcement program and investigation, discovery, and cleanup concentrated in environmental justice communities. To achieve this objective, DTSC will prioritize the following activities:

- **Improve Equity in Enforcement activities**

Enhance DTSC's enforcement across all programs to provide a robust, equitable, and forward leaning enforcement and compliance program. DTSC will prioritize resources to address historic inequity in the distribution of environmental burdens. This means DTSC will prioritize its enforcement resources while maximizing our authorities to pursue enforcement in disadvantaged communities in a robust, timely, and uniform manner.

Metrics and deliverables

Department of Toxic Substances Control

2023 Objectives and Priorities

- By December 2025, achieve 90% return to compliance rate for violations issued to permitted hazardous waste facilities located in vulnerable communities, and leverage our resources to bring the facilities with the remaining 10% of violations into compliance. *DTSC Strategic Plan*
- Achieve 80% return to compliance rate for violations issued to all facilities located in vulnerable communities and leverage our resources to bring the facilities with the remaining 20% into compliance. *DTSC Strategic Plan*
- Include environmental justice principles and case studies in DTSC Enforcement Staff training with 100% attendance.
- Additional metrics need to consider penalties assessed for facilities located in vulnerable communities.

• **Implementing the Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities Initiative**

Continue implementing 1) a full site discovery and enforcement program, targeting vulnerable communities for cleanup of contaminated land; 2) a grant program to fund response actions at brownfield sites; and 3) a work development and training program to promote public health, community engagement, and equity, while supporting local economies.

Metrics and deliverables

- By June 30, 2026, increase by 20% annual acres cleared in vulnerable communities. *CVCI- specific metrics*
- Future implementation will address issues raised by community groups.
- Additional metrics need to reflect community input and success in addressing issues raised by community groups.

• **Create and implement system to identify Cumulative Impacts in communities**

Conduct community-based pilot projects in vulnerable communities to analyze impacts. DTSC will use findings from the pilots to shape the regulatory framework. As we develop regulations, we will collaborate with environmental justice partners about how best to consider cumulative impacts, pollution burdens, health disparities, and other social vulnerabilities in permit decisions.

Metrics and deliverables

- Host a public workshop on revised framework for SB 673.
- Conduct EnviroScreen-based cumulative impacts analyses in Kettleman City and Buttonwillow with community input.
- Initiate North Richmond cumulative impacts pilot in partnership with US EPA and the community.

• **Strengthen regulatory oversight of metal shredder facilities**

Continue pursuing steps to hold metal shredders – many of which are in our most vulnerable and underserved communities – accountable through strengthening our regulatory oversight. When metal shredders are regulated in the same manner as other industries that pose threats to human health and the environment, impacts to vulnerable communities will be reduced.

Department of Toxic Substances Control

2023 Objectives and Priorities

Metrics and deliverables

- Process received permit applications. We are currently processing two permit applications.
- Initiate Chemically Treated Metal Shredder Residue rulemaking in CYQ2.
- Inspect four metal shredders.

- **Racial Equity Framework (internal)**

Continue implementing DTSC's Racial Equity Framework, a document that guides our actions and focuses on creating an inclusive and diverse organization with the capacity to serve and deliver programs through an equity lens. The framework is divided into four steps that encompass a range of short- and long-term concrete actions.

1. Understanding racial equity and bias,
2. Recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce,
3. Promoting an inclusive work culture, and
4. Adopting results-based accountability for racial equity.

Metrics and deliverables

- Release the Framework in CY Q1. Deliverables and metrics are in development. CY Q2 dashboard release will include initial metrics.
- Request Board of Environmental Safety (BES) partnership to develop surveys and tools to gather community feedback and input.
- Work with environmental justice and community groups and BES to finalize Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) framework and recruit members.

Objective 2: Public Engagement

DTSC has heard from our community partners and environmental justice advocates that a more robust commitment to transforming how we engage the public is critical to ensuring DTSC builds trust amongst those most egregiously impacted by decades of discriminatory environmental practices. DTSC hears and acknowledges that these steps are necessary to effectively address historical inequity in how we deliver our programs and services. In 2023, DTSC will collaborate with community members, EJ advocates, local and state representatives, and academia to begin to reenvision how we engage the public, and to build relationships with impacted communities so that this engagement is meaningful and embodies the principles of environmental justice. DTSC will conduct more active listening sessions, reflect what we've heard, and follow through with actions that reflect the input we receive from our external partners. We will collaborate with the BES to provide opportunities for public discussion on how best to incorporate community voices into our decision-making processes.

- **Adopt Best Practices for Community Engagement**

Department of Toxic Substances Control

2023 Objectives and Priorities

Work with members of the BES and the newly implemented EJAC to engage communities for feedback that leads to the development and implementation of best practices for community engagement. Consider new approaches that may include solutions such as:

- World Café Meetings
- Improved feedback loops
- Improved systems and metrics for tracking and responding to public feedback
- Deploy Thought Exchange online tool for gathering information and surveying stakeholders

• **Equitable Community Revitalization Grant (ECRG) Program**

Collaborate with the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), and other community-based organizations to ensure grants are awarded for projects that improve the lived experience for community members most impacted by environmental inequity. In partnership with CEJA, CBE, and impacted communities, develop metrics for outcomes that align ECRG activities with community expectations and with DTSC's vision of all of California thriving in a healthy environment.

Increase understanding amongst DTSC team members of the impact decades of discriminatory land-use and housing laws and policies have had on communities of color so that grant award decisions are made with the goal of addressing historical inequity.

• **Transform Engagement for Communities Impacted by Exide**

Actively listen and collaborate with community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, the Board of Environmental Safety, local and state representatives, and community members to find approaches, tools, and technologies that rebuild community trust in DTSC's oversight of the Exide cleanup. We will significantly increase our presence and availability in these impacted communities with the goal of providing clear and accessible information about how we are conducting cleanup activities, and about the post cleanup residual risks to human health and the environment. We will increase awareness of programs and services beyond cleanup activities that address the harm Exide and its predecessors caused the community, human health, and the environment

Objective 3: Sustained Performance

In 2023, we will continue to build on improvements we've made to strengthen our operations, solidify IT infrastructure, and develop more efficient business processes to deliver mandated services. We will continue to improve our performance and drive toward organizational excellence with decision-making, data management, and workforce management initiatives. These improvements will increase our ability to protect human health and the environment and strengthen trust with our external partners.

The following priorities are fundamental to DTSC demonstrating sustained performance in its programs:

April 2023

Department of Toxic Substances Control

2023 Objectives and Priorities

- **Reduce Continued Permits**

Make decisions on permits that have been continued for more than five years. These permits are associated with facilities that have very complex operations. When DTSC began its Permitting Improvement Initiative over five years ago, we had twenty-four permits continued longer than five years. Today, we have only six. This reduction means that the majority of the most complex facilities now have stronger, more enforceable permits that incorporate the latest technologies and are more protective of human health and the environment. It is crucial that we continue our progress toward addressing all continued permits so that all communities with permitted facilities experience improved protection of their health and environment.

Metrics and deliverables

- Public notice permit decisions for all remaining 5+ year continued permits.
- Reduce the number of remaining 2+ year continued permits to less than 10.
- Release a VSP regulations rulemaking package for public comment.
- 100% of all reminder letters sent to permitted facilities to ensure timely submittal of permit applications. *DTSC Strategic Plan*.

- **Hazardous Waste Management Report**

Submit a Hazardous Waste Management Report to the Board of Environmental Safety in preparation for the development of a Statewide Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The initial report is the starting point to determine what additional research is needed to generate the Plan. The Report objectives include:

- Establish a baseline understanding of how hazardous wastes are managed in the State of California,
- Identify data gaps and items that require additional research, and
- Begin to develop strategies for the completion of additional research to fill these data gaps.

Metrics and deliverables

- Submit the Hazardous Waste Management Report to the Board in Spring 2023.

- **Santa Susanna Field Laboratory Program Environmental Information Report (PEIR)**

DTSC has developed a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The PEIR enables DTSC to evaluate and mitigate potential environmental impacts associated with soil and groundwater cleanup activities and the removal of structures under DTSC authority at SSFL. In spring 2023 DTSC will finalize the SSFL PEIR, release the Final PEIR and certify it. Issuance and certification of the PEIR is a significant milestone that sets the stage to move into the cleanup phase at SSFL.

Metrics and deliverables

- Publish the PEIR for certification in March 2023.

Department of Toxic Substances Control

2023 Objectives and Priorities

Objective 4: Strategic Management

- **DTSC 2020-2024 Strategic Plan 2023 Priorities**

Since DTSC launched the Strategic Plan in 2020, the department has accomplished 61 of the 133 original Prioritized Actions. DTSC will issue an update to our Plan accomplishments and commitments in January 2023. The Prioritized Actions scheduled to be completed in 2023 are spread across five long-term strategic goals – broad statements of what we aim to achieve, which give definition to our Mission and Vision – for the duration of the Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1. We will build **Strong Partnerships** to collaborate with all stakeholders.
- Goal 2. We will promote **Environmental Justice** to prevent harm and protect the most vulnerable.
- Goal 3. We will deliver **High-Performing Programs and Services** effectively and on time.
- Goal 4. We will enhance our **Organizational Health** so that we are more inclusive, productive, and accountable.
- Goal 5. We will improve our **Fiscal Stewardship** through greater transparency, fortified by secure and reliable funding.

Metrics and deliverables

- Publish the DTSC Strategic Plan refresh by February 10.
- DTSC expects to complete all Prioritized Actions identified for the calendar year. Progress will be tracked through the DTSC Strategic Plan dashboard. [DTSC Strategic Plan](#)