

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Office of the Administrator**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



April 10, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510


Dear Madam Speaker:

After thorough review and consideration, NASA has determined that Agency real estate holdings located at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) in Ventura County, California, are no longer needed for mission requirements.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 207 of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended, (42 U.S.C. 2476a), this letter is to formally notify you that NASA intends to declare this real property as excess.

Enclosed is a brief summary of the NASA-controlled real estate located at the SSFL. We would be pleased to discuss this matter in greater detail at your convenience.

Sincerely,

  
Christopher J. Scolese  
Acting Administrator

Enclosure

## **Summary of NASA Real Estate Located at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, Ventura County, California**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) proposes to dispose of its real estate holdings, in their entirety, located at the NASA-owned portion of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) in Ventura County, California. The NASA Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), Space Shuttle Program, and Space Shuttle Main Engine (SSME) Project Office have no further need for the real or personal property at the SSFL. Reviews of other NASA programs and projects have also indicated no need for this facility. Consequently, this property is considered excess to the mission requirements of NASA. Below is summary information detailing NASA's real estate holdings at the SSFL.

### **1. Site Description and History**

The SSFL is located in southeastern Ventura County, California, near the crest of the Simi Hills at the western border of the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles County. The SSFL is bordered by Bell Canyon on the south; the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's Sage Ranch Park and the American Jewish University (formerly Brandeis-Bardin Institute) on the north; several ranches and two mobile home parks on the east; and Meier and Runkle Canyons on the west. The site is located approximately 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles, California. The SSFL occupies approximately 2,850 acres and is divided by ownership into NASA-owned property (450 acres) and property owned by The Boeing Company (2,400 acres).

The SSFL is divided into four administrative areas and two undeveloped areas:

**Area I** consists of 671 acres owned by The Boeing Company (Boeing) and approximately 42 acres owned by NASA (formerly owned by U.S. Air Force) in the northeast portion of the site. NASA's portion of Area I housed a liquid oxygen plant that was demolished in 1970. The portion of Area I owned by Boeing contains administrative and laboratory facilities and was formerly used for rocket engine testing.

**Area II** consists of approximately 410 acres owned by NASA in the central portion of the site. Area II is operated for NASA by Boeing under an existing site operations contract. Area II contains individual rocket test-firing areas identified as Alfa, Bravo, Coca, and Delta. Each test-firing area has supporting infrastructure and facilities. Alfa and Bravo supported the RS-27A rocket engine program. Coca supported the Saturn and SSME test program. All of the Delta area test stands were demolished in 1982.

**Area III** consists of 114 acres in the northwest portion of the site and is owned and operated by Boeing. Area III includes systems test area (STL-IV) and associated laboratories.

**Area IV** consists of 290 acres owned and operated by Boeing. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) leased 90 acres in this area for their activities. The DOE and its contractors operated several nuclear reactors and associated fuel facilities and laboratories within this area.

**Northern Undeveloped Area** consists of approximately 180 acres of open space, adjacent to Areas II, III, and IV. This area was acquired by Boeing in 1998. It is naturally vegetated and has not been used for industrial activities.

**Southern Undeveloped Area** consists of approximately 1,200 acres of open space along the southern boundary of the site. This area was acquired in 1968 and 1976 by Boeing. It is naturally vegetated and has not been used for industrial activities.

The following Commercial entities: North American Aviation; Rockwell International Corporation, Rocketdyne Division; Boeing North American Inc.; and The Boeing Company have operated the SSFL over the past 50 years, primarily to test rocket engines. In 1958, the United States Air Force (USAF) acquired title to the Liquid Oxygen Plant in Area I and all of Area II from Rocketdyne (Rockwell). In August 1962, NASA negotiated a facility contract with the USAF for joint usage of Area II. In 1973 and 1978, NASA acquired this property (Areas II and I, respectively) from the Air Force to support the SSME project. Since 1962, NASA has provided the facilities to Rocketdyne and its successor, Boeing, through its facility contract for use in performing NASA contract work. The MSFC, located in Huntsville, Alabama, manages the NASA SSFL facility contracts.

## **2. Utilities Infrastructure**

The SSFL utilities are interrelated among the four administrative areas detailed above.

**Electrical and Uninterruptible Power System:** Southern California Edison (SCE) is the sole provider of electricity. The electrical power distribution at the site is a complex interactive system that provides supplies electricity to the SSFL, as well as to both Black and Bell Canyon (privately-owned areas outside of SSFL). Due to the distribution capabilities of the electrical system, alteration or demolition of the Area II and Area III sections could affect the distribution lines to both of these canyons. SCE has invested in upgrades to the transmission lines and the Chatsworth Substation, which serves the SSFL, as well as the nearby canyon areas. This has allowed them to extend the service life of the substation for years to come and to delay the construction of a new substation in the Simi Valley-Santa Susana area.

**Natural Gas:** The natural gas system at the SSFL enters the site at the west boundary line. The gas line in NASA Area II supplies gas to all of Areas I and II.

**Sewer System:** There are three sewage treatment plants on the SSFL site, one in Area I, one in Area II, and one in Area III. The Area II sewage treatment plant, on NASA property, is used as a holding station, and the contents are transferred to the plant in Area III. At present, these sewage treatment plants are basically holding ponds, and the waste is transported off site for disposal.

**Water System:** Fresh water is purchased from Ventura County Waterworks. The water system at SSFL is a gravity-fed loop system that is dependent on the water tanks on top of Skyline Drive, an elevated ridge located at the SSFL, to provide the pressure for the system. There are no water pumps in the system except for one that pumps the water up from Simi Valley to the tank at the main gate. The system has been designed to provide multiple sources of domestic water throughout the site and supplies all of the Areas at Santa Susana.

**Data and Phone Lines:** Digital telephone service is provided by AT&T, which enables the Boeing-supported communication infrastructure that presently serves the entire site. The point of entry for AT&T service is located in Boeing-owned Area I and is relayed to NASA facilities via Boeing's Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system. The Boeing communication system has also hosted fiber optic data lines to support NASA onsite activity. These phone and data lines provide integral support to the existing facility fire and security systems.

**Reclamation Water System:** The reclamation water system is inactive at this time, with over one million gallons of reclaim water in storage. The system was used as means for cooling flame buckets on the test stands at the completion of testing a rocket engine. When testing was completed, the system was deactivated.

The distribution of reclaim water is managed by the California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), which prohibits transfer of the water to onsite ponds for evaporation. NASA is pursuing alternatives and, in the interim, is using the existing tank system to contain the reclaim water.

### **3. Outgrants**

There are a number of outgrants associated with the SSFL for the purpose of providing easement and right of way for roads and utilities, several of which cross from one administrative area into another. The NASA-owned property at SSFL is traversed by approximately ten easement parcels granted by the U.S. Government to North American Rockwell Corporation (now Boeing) for roads, water conveyance, electric, and telephone systems. These permanent easements remain a part of the NASA real estate holdings proposed for disposal as described in the summary plan for excessing on page six.

#### **4. Jurisdiction**

The Federal Government has proprietary jurisdiction over the NASA portion of the SSFL.

#### **5. Historic Resources**

##### **Buildings and Structures**

In 2006 and 2007, NASA evaluated and identified historic resources located on the SSFL. The evaluation included an initial review of 135 NASA-owned buildings, structures and sites located within Areas I and II. This initial review revealed that 60 of the facilities are temporary structures, small storage sheds, roadways, pipelines, or other small objects such as light fixture poles used for generic purposes with no specific historic function. The remaining 75 facilities include the Alfa, Bravo, Coca, Delta, Storable Propellant Area, and Service Area complexes of Area II and were surveyed for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

As a result of archival research and field survey, six test stands and three associated control houses were determined to be NRHP-eligible. The NRHP-designated areas of significance cited were “Military” (Cold War) and “Space Exploration,” (circa mid-1950s to 1991), under Criterion A for their exceptionally important role in the development and testing of various rocket engines, and Criterion C for their specialized engineering and design. In addition to the nine individually eligible historic properties, three historic districts were identified as NRHP-eligible: the Alfa Test Area, Bravo Test Area, and Coca Test Area Historic Districts, under the following NRHP-designated areas of significance: “Military,” “Engineering,” “Transportation,” and “Space Exploration.”

##### **Archeological Resources**

Area II of the SSFL contains one archeological site – the Burro Flats Painted Cave and Community Mill (Site No. 76000539) – listed on the NRHP on May 5, 1976. The NHRP historic significance designation cited is “Information Potential and Prehistoric Art.” The NRHP cultural affiliation designation is “Native American” and the period of significance designation is “1000 - 1499 AD.” The approximately 10-acre site consists of sandstone rock shelters containing pictographs (rock art paintings) and petroglyphs (rock art that has been scored or incised into the rock surface). It also includes many bedrock milling features that would have been used for grinding acorns and smaller cupules that may have been used for food processing. Much of the site consists of midden, debris associated with human habitation. Excavations of a cremation burial have revealed past mortuary practices.

### **Regulatory Compliance**

NASA completed the archeological and historically-eligible surveys in compliance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (P. L. 89-655); the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979, as amended (P. L. 86-95); the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (P. L. 91-190); Executive Order (EO) 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment; EO 13287, Preserve America; and all applicable laws, regulation and Agency policy. NASA will continue to manage and protect these historic resources until property title is transferred.

Following NASA's declaration of excess of the NASA-owned SSFL property, the General Services Administration (GSA) will take the lead in Section 106 consultation with support from NASA Cultural Resource Management personnel. The historic resources will require consultation in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA to address how potential reuse considerations that may adversely affect site historic resources will be mitigated. It is NASA's position that, while local tribes that maintain an interest in the Burro Flats Archeological Site are not Federally recognized tribal groups, their access to the site for tribal ceremonies should be honored.

## **6. Environmental Compliance Requirements**

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

The NEPA requires all Federal agencies to consider potential impacts of any Federal action as part of the decision-making process of programs or projects prior to implementation. Pursuant to NEPA requirements, NASA completed an environmental review of environmental conditions on the NASA-owned property at SSFL. On November 14, 2007, a Record of Environmental Consideration was signed, indicating that there is no significant environmental impact associated with NASA reporting the property at SSFL as excess. Reporting of NASA-owned real property at SSFL to GSA contemplates no significant change in the existing use of land. NASA will continue clean-up activities as required by Federal and state laws. NASA also will continue to manage cultural resources on SSFL until the property is transferred from NASA's control. NEPA documentation necessary for final disposal of the SSFL as excess property will be managed by GSA.

### **Stormwater Permit**

Stormwater runoff from the SSFL is regulated by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit held by Boeing. The permit was adopted along with a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) on November 1, 2007. The CDO specifies that numeric chemical limits from the NPDES Permit become enforceable for two stormwater discharge outfalls on June 10, 2009. The CDO further calls for Engineered Natural Treatment Systems to treat and filter water before discharge. One stormwater outfall

receives measured runoff from remediation areas on the NASA property in Areas I and II. On December 3, 2008, the RWQCB issued another order requiring soil removals from these areas in order to remove the source of chemicals received from the outfall. This order calls for a detailed work plan and schedule for removals by May 2009.

### **Contamination and Remedial Action**

From the mid 1950s through the early 2000s, the USAF and, subsequently, NASA test-fired liquid-fueled rocket engines and performed other propulsion-related research. Releases of solvents used to clean engines after testing, fuels, and use of other chemicals have resulted in soil and groundwater contamination at most areas where these activities took place. Trichloroethylene (TCE) is the most significant contaminant in groundwater. Other soil and groundwater contaminants include polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and metals. Five distinct TCE plumes in groundwater exist within the NASA areas; one (Coca/Delta plume) has migrated off NASA property via discharge through seeps and springs, but remains within SSFL boundaries. These flows are controlled through monitoring and pumping as required.

Remedial activities are being performed under the oversight of the DTSC, pursuant to a Consent Order issued in August 2007. The Consent Order requires investigation and remediation at 27 Solid Waste Management Units and 19 Areas of Concern within the NASA property. For management purposes, these areas are divided into four groups (Group 2, 3, 4, and 9). These NASA areas include four test stands, propellant storage and loading facilities, a former liquid oxygen manufacturing plant, existing and closed surface impoundments, a former incinerator, and an inactive sewage treatment plant. Sitewide groundwater contamination is a separate area of investigation governed by the Consent Order and is being pursued jointly by Boeing, NASA, and DOE.

The Consent Order is currently being revised to address contamination under the State Superfund Law with the goal to complete all investigations and remediation by 2017. NASA will continue to be responsible for all remedial actions on its property at SSFL until those actions are completed.

### **7. Summary of Plan for Excessing**

NASA continually reviews its facility requirements to ensure retention of only those assets needed to accomplish its mission. After thorough review, NASA has determined there is no foreseeable need for its real property assets located at the SSFL. Consequently, pursuant to the Federal Property and Administrative Act of 1949, as amended (40 U.S.C. 471 et seq.), NASA intends to declare the SSFL property as excess and to submit a Report of Excess to the GSA for the disposal of these Federal assets.