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COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER

December 13, 2023

Re: Tustin Hangar Incident

Dear Mayor of Tustin and City of Tustin Council Members,

As the County Health Officer, I am writing this letter to inform you of the efforts that I and the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) have made to protect the public health of the community in response to the recent Hangar Fire Incident, as well as to provide guidance on actions that can be taken going forward to inform, provide reassurance to, and protect the health of the community affected by the recent Hangar Fire Incident.

As you know, the City of Tustin and the County of Orange have declared local emergencies in response to the Hangar Fire Incident. Accordingly, under California Health and Safety Code section 101040, I have the authority to take necessary and appropriate preventive measures to protect the public health of the community from exposure to the hazards in connection with the Hangar Fire Incident. To that effect, I have been diligently working as part of the Environmental Unit of the Incident Management Team (IMT) since the outset to assess and rely on the guidance and information provided to the IMT members by the United State Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD), the United States Navy Branch Realignment Closure (USN BRAC) staff, and certified asbestos consultants (CACs) to formulate and provide needed guidance to the community as relates to public health of the community through the IMT.

Results from tests performed to date by multiple entities (including South Coast AQMD, US EPA, USN and IMT contractors) in response to the Hangar Fire Incident suggests that the main concern for asbestos exposure was from bulk debris while asbestos fibers in the air played a limited role. While several heavy metals were originally detected in mobile monitoring of the smoke plume, additional metal testing revealed these returned to normal background levels. Air monitoring of metals collected to date were under the level of concern or were not detected. Experts from the IMT's Environmental Unit have determined that testing indoor spaces is not necessary, thanks to reassuring test results from nearby facilities (Orange County Sheriff Department's facilities, Public Schools, local parks, community centers). The most concerning health hazard throughout the Fire Hangar Incident that remains is Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) debris at the site and direct contact with this debris.

I recommend the following to help minimize the health risks and to provide reassurances to the community in relation to the Hangar Fire Incident:

1. Expedite containment/stabilization and safe removal and transport of ACM from the North Hangar fire site.
2. Monitoring/testing
 - a. Follow state and federal regulations for testing and monitoring.
 - b. Maintain monitoring efforts in the immediate area until ACM is transported offsite.
 - c. Publish real-time data on the main website for public awareness.
3. Community Resources
 - a. Post the updated public messaging to include the HCA's Community Guide to Phases as well as Health and Safety tips. See attached.
 - b. Post US Navy's comprehensive plan for remediation and clean up once it is reviewed and authorized by state and federal regulatory authorities.
 - c. Provide public notification prior to transporting ACM debris off-site.
 - d. Provide additional resources to support the affected community.
 - Establish technical resources including the availability of certified asbestos consultants and certified industrial hygienists who can provide general professional guidance in relation to the incident to maintain consistency throughout the process.
4. Reopen currently closed schools and parks in the immediate area once both of the following criteria are met:
 - a. facility/site receives CAC clearance and
 - b. hangar doors are lowered, and remaining ACM attached to concrete pillars are lowered and stabilized.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

Respectfully,



Regina Chinsio-Kwong, DO
County Health Officer
Chief of Public Health Services

cc: Chairman Donald Wagner, Supervisor, Third District
Frank Kim, County Executive Officer
Massoud Shamel, Senior Deputy County Counsel

Attachments:
Community Guide to Phases
Health and Safety Tips