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Study Finds No Lead or Asbestos in the Community Related to the Navy North Hangar Fire

The study results and sampling methodology were validated by the federal EPA, state, and county environmental agencies for the City-commissioned exterior soil and indoor air/dust sampling.

(City of Tustin, CA – May 8, 2024) – Results from a detailed study commissioned by the City of Tustin, and approved by federal, state, and county regulators found no lead or asbestos contamination in both Tustin and the surrounding community that could be attributable to last November’s Navy North Hangar Fire.

The comprehensive exterior soil and interior air/dust sampling study compared findings from 80 randomly selected homes in close proximity to the hangar fire to homes in both Irvine and Santa Ana that were located well outside the area of the fire’s impact.

No asbestos fibers were identified in soil, indoor air, or indoor dust above health screening criteria in any of the 80 homes. The study identified three older homes – all in the “control” cities of Irvine and Santa Ana – where lead levels in outdoor soil were detected above screening levels but consistent with urban background concentrations historically documented in the Santa Ana area.

One home in Tustin was identified where lead in household dust slightly exceeded residential screening criteria in one of three household dust samples. The one Tustin homeowner and three Santa Ana homeowners with lead detections above screening criteria in soil or dust are being notified of their respective testing results, but no further action is necessary.

Testing at the other 49 homes in Tustin and 27 homes in Irvine and Santa Ana did not detect lead or asbestos that exceeded state or federal health standards.

The sampling methodology received approval from county, state, and federal regulators and experts, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Orange County Health Care Agency, CTEH and the U.S. Navy.

“As an elected city leader, but more importantly as a father and homeowner near the Navy Hangar, I welcome the news that the sampling study did not identify any lead or asbestos contamination in

our community that could be attributed to the Navy North Hangar Fire,” Mayor Austin Lumbard said.

Lumbard noted that the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) previously reported that no airborne asbestos fibers from the Navy North Hangar Fire have been detected by 24-hour daily air monitoring and sampling since the November 7 fire.

“Although the OCHCA determined the sampling study was scientifically unnecessary based on the extensive data that has been continually collected, the City decided to commission this effort to go above and beyond what was required to address any lingering community concerns,” Lumbard said.

The study was conducted by Geosyntec Consultants, which has over 30 years of experience in addressing post-fire conditions and has been involved in community sampling studies related to the Aliso Canyon natural gas leak, the USS Bonhomme Richard fire in San Diego, the Fort McMurray wildfire in Alberta, Canada, the 2003/2007 Southern California wildfires, the 2015 Butte and Valley wildfires, and the 2021 Dixie wildfire.

All 80 volunteers participating in the Study will be provided with individualized result summaries and a full copy of the laboratory analytical results for samples collected at their residence.

The U.S. EPA has deemed the U.S. Navy to be the responsible party for any releases from the Navy North Hangar Fire, and the six-month remediation of fire-related debris continues.

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