



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

December 11, 2015

Mr. Mark Armstrong  
Operations Section Chief  
Valley and Butte Fires – Lake and Calaveras Counties, California  
FEMA-4240-DR-CA  
Joint Field Office  
8745 Folsom Blvd.  
Sacramento, California 95826

**SUBJECT:            EPA Review of the Assessment of Burn Debris – 2015 Wildfires, Lake and Calaveras Counties, California, dated December 7, 2015**

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

As tasked by FEMA, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the report “Assessment of Burn Debris – 2015 Wildfires, Lake and Calaveras Counties, California”, dated December 7, 2015 prepared by Geosyntec Consultants for the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Along with EPA/ESF10 staff the document was reviewed by Dr. David R. Taylor, Ph.D. ASQ CQE and Mr. Marlon Mesquite of US EPA Region 9’s Quality Assurance Office.

We find that the sampling event described in the report was in accordance with the “Sampling and Analysis Plan, Burned Debris Characterization, 2015 Butte and Valley Wildfires, Calaveras and Lake Counties, California” dated October 21, 2015, also prepared by Geosyntec Consultants for CalEPA.

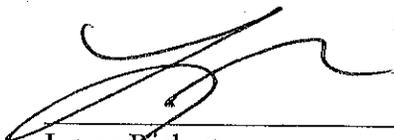
Statistically valid sample collection was conducted in each County, with sample numbers sufficient for statistical analysis. The data were subjected to a Level I laboratory data validation. Statistical analyses were performed on data sets from both Counties, with results compared to the DTSC Human Health Risk Assessment - Note 3, Modified Screening Levels for residential and commercial properties (DTSC-SLs), California background metals concentrations (1996) and the November 2015 - EPA Region IX Regional Screening Levels for residential and commercial properties (RSLs) and for protection of groundwater (SSL).

EPA accepts that the results of the assessment, as documented by this report, demonstrate that burn debris and ash in residential areas affected by the Butte and Valley Wildfires contain

contaminants whose concentrations exceed health-based and groundwater protection criteria. EPA also concurs with CalEPA that removal of this ash would be in the "public interest" as defined by FEMA (FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy 9523.13).

If you have any questions or wish to discuss EPA's review please do not hesitate to contact me by phone, (415.972.3022) or email, richman.lance@epa.gov.

Regards,



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Lance Richman  
ESF10 – 4240-DR-CA Valley and Butte Fires  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

CC: John Christensen, Infrastructure Branch Director, JFO-Sacramento  
Paul Penn, CalEPA  
Adam Palmer, CalEPA - DTSC