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## **Governor's Veto of Toxics Regulators Reform Bill Condemned by Environmental and Environmental Justice Organizations**

A Years-Long Effort to Reform Department of Toxics Substances Control Delayed Again

**SACRAMENTO**--Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed Assembly Bill 995 last night, ending for now hopes that the troubled Department of Toxic Substances Control would be reformed to better protect Californians' health and safety.

The bill would have established a number of reforms suggested by an independent review. Those reforms included creating a governing board for the agency responsible for overseeing policy setting and permitting review. The board would conduct its business in public, including through public hearings.

The bill also would have allowed some fee increases to help stabilize the perennially underfunded agency's financial footing.

Finally, the bill created a process to determine what other fees requiring a two-thirds vote of the legislature are needed and justified to make the agency effective. It did not set those fees.

In his [veto message](#), the governor said that while he supported the bill's establishment of a governance structure that would provide more transparency, he was rejecting the bill because it did not provide adequate fees, including the fees that would have required a two-thirds vote of legislature.

The Department of Toxic Substances Control is responsible for overseeing hazardous waste facilities, hazardous waste transport, and other regulations designed to reduce human and environmental exposure to chemical toxics.

### **Statements of Environmental Group Leaders:**

"AB 995 would have helped protect Californians from harmful pollutants and the Governor's veto of this important bill was more than disappointing. It's time for real action to ensure that the state department responsible for protecting people and the environment from toxic pollution can do its

job. We cannot continue to wait on addressing hazardous waste, toxic pollution, and the cleanup of toxic sites in a meaningful way. This is about protecting public health, and if the Governor isn't going to move this bill forward that represents lots of hard work from stakeholders and legislators, he has a responsibility to reform DTSC swiftly and sufficiently through administrative and executive action. Californians health is at stake.” — **Mary Creasman, Chief Executive Officer, California League of Conservation Voters**

“After years of warning, DTSC is now insolvent. Without funding for clean-ups, enforcement, and hazardous waste facility inspections, vulnerable populations are at even higher risk of toxic exposures. In light of the multiple health threats facing our communities, it is simply unconscionable for the Governor to veto AB 995, especially without an alternative plan to keep the Department running. The state can't afford to walk away now. Our communities are paying too high a price for California's continued inaction.”

— **Ingrid Brostrom, Assistant Director, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment**

“Environmental justice communities are tired of bearing the burden of California's toxic waste dumping grounds. CEJA Action is deeply disappointed that the Governor vetoed AB 995. AB 995 was a unique bipartisan solution to clean up decades of toxic waste and bring \$21 million in from corporate polluters. Our undocumented, low income, working class, and Black Indigenous and communities of color have waited long enough for action from our leaders. In 2021, any climate, public health agenda that claims to be progressive for California must include reforms to the Department of Toxic Substances Control.”

— **Katie Valenzuela, Policy and Political Director, CEJA Action**

“DTSC's mission is to protect people, the environment, and impacted communities from toxic harm. However, the Department has struggled to deliver on this promise because of significant issues with its governance and fee structures. AB 995 was a culmination of years of hard work by advocates and the Legislature to take an important step toward transparency and accountability at DTSC. The Governor's veto is a setback but we will continue the important work of reforming DTSC.” — **Nikita Koraddi, CA Legislative Advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council**

“People need to be protected from exposure to toxics. Everyone agrees on this. AB 995 provided a reasonable big step on the path to ensure there would be protection from toxics. Now the governor's veto needlessly sets back for at least another year, if not longer, long-awaited reforms to allow DTSC to do the job it was created decades ago to do.”— **Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California**

