Department of Toxic Substances Control

Yana Garcia
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

Katherine M. Butler, MPH, Director
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Gavin Newsom
Governor

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

December 12, 2025

Julie Arthur
Director of Facilities Planning
Palm Springs Unified School District
150 District Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92264
jarthur@psusd.us

RE: MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE BUBBLING WELLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODERNIZATION PROJECT DECEMBER 10, 2025, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2025120436

Dear Julie Arthur,

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Bubbling Wells Elementary School Modernization Project (Project). Palm Springs Unified School District proposes modernizing Bubbling Wells Elementary School (BWES), including replacing existing modular and portable classroom buildings with new, permanent one-story buildings, renovating and modernizing the existing permanent buildings, developing new hardcourt play areas, playgrounds, and athletic fields, and improving landscaping throughout the campus. The Project would provide necessary educational, safety, and accessibility upgrades while improving the campus layout and aesthetics. The BWES campus is located at 67501 Camino Campanero in unincorporated Riverside County, south of the City of Desert Hot Springs. The campus is bound by Camino Campanero to the north, Bubbling Wells Road to the east, Avenida Florencita to the west, and single-family residential neighborhoods to the south. Vacant, undeveloped land is located north and west of the campus. DTSC recommends and requests consideration of the following comments:

1. If the district plans to use California Department of Education (CDE) State funds for the Project, then the district shall comply with the requirements of Education Code (EDC), §17210, §17213.1, and §17213.2, unless otherwise specifically exempted under section §17268. If the district is not using CDE State funds for the Project, or is otherwise specifically exempt under section §17268, DTSC recommends the district continue to investigate, clean up the Site under the oversight of Riverside County and in concurrence with all applicable DTSC guidance documents, if necessary. For more information on the CDE State funding, please visit the Office of Public-School Construction webpage. A local education agency may also voluntarily request the CDE site/plan approval for locally funded site acquisitions and new construction projects. In these cases, CDE will require DTSC to review and approve prior to its final approval, except when exempt under section 17268.
2. All imported soil/fill material should be tested to assess any contaminants of concern meet screening levels as outlined in DTSC's PEA Guidance Manual. Additionally, DTSC advises referencing the DTSC Information Advisory Clean Imported Fill Material Fact Sheet if importing fill is necessary. To minimize the possibility of introducing contaminated soil/fill material, there should be documentation of the origins of the soil/fill material and, if applicable, sampling be conducted to ensure that the imported soil/fill material are suitable for the intended land use. The soil sampling should include analysis based on the source of the soil/fill and knowledge of prior land use.

DTSC reserves the right to comment on any future circulated documents related to this Project based on our review or proposed or incorporated changes, measures, or project features. DTSC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the MND for the Bubbling Wells Elementary School Modernization Project. If you would like to proceed with DTSC's school environmental review process, please visit DTSC's Evaluating & Clean-up School 3-Step Process to begin a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. If you have any questions or would like clarification on DTSC's comments, please respond to this letter or via our CEQA Review email for additional guidance.

Sincerely,

Tamara Purvis
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HWMP - Permitting Division – CEQA Unit
Department of Toxic Substances Control
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cc: (via email)

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