

**Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (Delta MERP)
Community Stakeholder Group Meeting Notes**

May 20th, 2015 – West Sacramento – 9:30AM-12:00PM

In Attendance:

Name	Organization
Kathryn Kynett	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Margy Gassel	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Janis Cooke	Central Valley Water Board
Laura McLellan	Central Valley Water Board
Gabriela Pasat	Delta Conservancy/California Department of Public Health
Alyce Ujihara	California Department of Public Health
Alcira Dominguez	California Department of Public Health
Nanna Bailey	Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District
Doug Rischbieter	Department of Water Resources/Division of Environmental Services
Hengsothea Ung	APSARA
Bob Brodberg	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Susi Vang	La Familia Counseling Center
Sophy Pho	Lao Khmu Association, Inc.
Andy Gordus	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Amber Taxiera (via webex)	The Sierra Fund
G. Fred Lee (via webex)	G. Fred Lee & Associates
Tran Pham (via webex)	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Wesley Smith (via webex)	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Lauren Hughes (via webex)	California Indian Environmental Alliance
Rachel McNeil (via webex)	California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Introduction and Welcome (Delta Conservancy - Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon & Gabriela Pasat)

The Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (Delta MERP) is a multi-year, multi-agency effort to raise awareness of mercury in Delta waters and to reduce mercury exposure from consumption of Delta fish. Community stakeholder meetings provide input as to how the Delta MERP can be improved, and educate the public as to what resources and tools for outreach and education are available.

Acronyms

APSARA— Asian Pacific Self Development and Residential Association
Delta MERP—Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program
CDPH—California Department of Public Health
CIEA—California Indian Environmental Alliance

OEHHA—California Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

PCBs—Polychlorinated biphenyls

Small Grant Program Update

Three organizations were awarded \$15,000 each to implement their projects proposed to the Small Grants Program. The following organizations received awards: the California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA), Lao Khmu Association, Inc., and Asian Pacific Self Development and Residential Association (APSARA). Grant agreements have been finalized and projects will soon begin implementation. A brief introduction to the organization and funded project was given by a representative from each grantee organization. Summaries are provided below.

[Lao Khmu Association, Inc.](#), is a nonprofit organization that has been serving the Southeast Asian community in the Stockton area for over 40 years. Lao Khmu originally served as a hub for assistance to local refugees and has since expanded to become an established provider of many social services focused on improving the lives of Southeast Asians in Stockton and San Joaquin County through empowerment, capacity building, social work, and community health programs. Through the Delta MERP Small Grant Program, Lao Khmu Association, Inc., is integrating education about reducing exposure to contaminants from consuming fish with existing services and is providing education at community events, group presentations, and one-on-one meetings focused on Delta MERP education.

[California Indian Environmental Alliance \(CIEA\)](#) is a nonprofit organization that was founded on the issue of providing education about mercury exposure through consumption of contaminated fish. CIEA works with American Indian health clinics, community clinics and directly with the impacted communities to provide consistent messaging and education on the toxic contaminants from mining. CIEA emphasizes eating fish safely instead of discouraging fish consumption and provides education related to mercury and other contaminants found in fish. Through the Small Grants Program, CIEA will reach out to and educate the most vulnerable populations directly and through a collaboration with Woman, Infant and Children (WIC) clinics and healthcare providers in Solano and Contra Costa County.

[Asian Pacific Self Development and Residential Association \(APSARA\)](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides social support services for Cambodian residents in San Joaquin County. A representative from APSARA provided an overview of Cambodian tradition, culture, and history of immigration to the United States and Stockton area. In 2007 to 2008 APSARA conducted outreach related to mercury contamination, translated materials, conducted surveys, completed a documentary, provided a tour of San Joaquin River and posted signs. APSARA will use different channels for educating their audience with regards to the issues associated with exposure to mercury from fish caught in the Delta such as Delta MERP material distribution at community events conducting presentations to the community, and developing a blog targeted at youth about fishing, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). APSARA will assist Delta MERP with translations of program materials and with Delta warning sign development activities. APSARA recommends that mercury exposure education be provided at the state-wide level each year for the Southeast Asian population.

In addition, the Small Grants Review Program Panel recommended that, moving forward, the Delta MERP team continue to explore ways to work with youth as well as with Hispanic/Latino, African-American and other populations not well-reached by current Delta MERP activities, and in geographic areas currently not well covered by Delta MERP activities such as the Tri-county area and the northern Delta – Sacramento and Yolo counties.

Delta Advisory Sign Development and Posting Update

The Delta MERP team has convened one meeting of a sign development workgroup and has received feedback from the three funded groups on the draft advisory sign to be posted throughout the Delta at fishing access locations. The Delta MERP staff is still interested in ideas for design of the sign. There will be three different signs, one design for each of the three advisory regions in the Delta. A new round of drafts is expected to be produced shortly based on input from the workgroup and funded groups. Field testing these sign designs with different target groups will occur June through October 2015. The focus of these sign designs is communicating to diverse audiences including non-English speakers. The Delta MERP team is interested in ideas related to sign design elements such as using a symbol to communicate chemical contaminants, and use of a map.

Special Presentation: *Community Outreach on Fish Contamination at Lake Nacimiento*, Presentation by Alyce Ujihara, Environmental Health investigation Branch - California Department of Public Health

Alyce Ujihara gave a presentation on mercury exposure reduction efforts that are taking place at Lake Nacimiento, a popular fishing location near Highway 101 in San Luis Obispo. The Lake is contaminated by a Superfund site, two abandoned mercury mines located upstream from the lake. A Superfund site is an uncontrolled or abandoned place where hazardous waste is located, possibly affecting local ecosystems or people. While the US Environmental Protection Agency is the lead agency for assessing contamination and cleaning up the site, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) conducts Public Health Assessments, evaluates potential health impacts, makes recommendations and implements activities for reducing possible health impacts at Superfund sites such as Lake Nacimiento. Exposure to mercury from consumption of contaminated fish continues to be a health concern at Lake Nacimiento and, as a part of their work, CDPH developed warning signs, distributed education materials, and worked with ethnic media. CDPH also supported Hmong youth for the Hmong in developing a video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILovk4-PfeE>) which was shown at this Community Stakeholder Group Meeting as an example of an outreach effort that Delta MERP could draw from.

Future Training/Education and Funding Opportunities: The Delta MERP Team is considering issuing another round of the Small Grants Program and is developing future training opportunities.

Additional Comments/Q&A:

- The MERP team received positive feedback on the design of the advisory fliers as they are visually enticing and educating.

- The Sierra Fund is posting kiosk flyers as signs around lakes and reservoirs and inquired as to why the Delta MERP Team is providing a different design for the sign than the advisory flyers, and recommended using the recommendations most protective of human health. The Delta MERP Team responded that they signs are using the advisory information but aim to be more visually accessible to diverse audiences.
- The representative from APSARA volunteered Park Village Apartments (with APSARA) as a good location for a sign.