



Settlement reached in chromium case

LOS ANGELES — The lawsuit filed by Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) against Ashland Inc., seeking environmental cleanup at industrial facilities in Santa Fe Springs, CA, has been resolved, and approval of the final settlement was made in the Los Angeles Superior Court.

CBE, represented by Gideon Kracov, an attorney with the Los Angeles-based litigation firm of Rose Klein & Marias LLP, was successful in obtaining agreement from three chemical companies in the Santa Fe Springs area to initiate and/or continue cleanup of contaminated soil and groundwater.

"This case and other similar lawsuits are an important step in cleaning up the groundwater in Southeast Los Angeles and ensuring a healthful water supply for future generations," said Kracov, whose legal practice specializes in environmental and business law.

The settlements involve three different facilities in the Santa Fe Springs area that CBE claimed had discharged chemicals known to cause cancer into the groundwater, thereby violating the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986. CBE charged that the toxic chemicals — including chromium 6 at one facility — seeped through the soil, migrating to groundwater aquifers below, fouling the water in those aquifers.

The settlement with Phibro-Tech Inc., one of the defendant facilities, requires it to undertake studies to extract chromium 6 and other contaminants from the soil, as well as provide cleanup procedures, including review of a groundwater treatment system, all under oversight of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

A settlement with a second company, Pilot Chemical Co., requires it to undertake a remedial action plan for cleanup of soil and groundwater at its facility in compliance with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board oversight.

The settlement with Ashland Chemical Co. requires the company to continue long-term environmental remedial action at its facility, including operation of a groundwater treatment system.