CPEO Urges NASA to Conduct Indoor Air Sampling
At Buildings Under Consideration for Housing Migrant Children

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Today the Mountain View-based Center for Public Environmental Oversight (CPEO) sent a letter to the Don Chuck, the Chief of NASA Ames Research Center's Environmental Management Division, urging NASA to conduct air sampling inside buildings at Moffett Field under consideration for housing migrant children. CPEO Executive Director Lenny Siegel explained, "The dormitory-type buildings where the federal government may house migrant children lie above a vast Superfund groundwater plume of trichloroethylene (TCE), a volatile organic compound known to cause cancers, cardiac birth defects, neurological conditions, and other illnesses." He added, "There is a potential for toxic vapors to rise from contaminated groundwater into overlying buildings."

Previous sampling of the indoor air in some of the buildings showed TCE contamination at levels considered acceptable by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but testing was conducted years ago. In the NASA Lodge, for example, air was sampled in July 2011. Siegel warned, "In general, summer samples understate vapor exposure and risk."

Therefore, CPEO wrote, "we believe it imperative that NASA conduct new indoor air sampling, as well as mitigation if necessary, to ensure that building occupants will not be exposed to unacceptably high levels of TCE vapors."

Siegel added, "NASA Ames' Environmental Division is professional and well respected, and U.S. EPA's team overseeing the cleanup at Moffett Field is a leader in the field of vapor intrusion, so we are hopeful that appropriate sampling will be conducted quickly, and that unacceptable TCE levels will be addressed, before migrant children are brought to Moffett Field."