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(9/14/11) LOS ANGELES – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has ordered Northrop Grumman Systems Corporation to spend an estimated $20 million to build a groundwater cleanup system to address groundwater contamination stemming primarily from the former Benchmark Technology facility in the City of Industry, Calif., located within the San Gabriel Valley Superfund Sites.

Formerly located at 200 South Turnbull Canyon Road, the Benchmark Technology facility is one of the largest sources of volatile organic compound groundwater contamination in the Puente Valley area of the Superfund site. Northrop Grumman will install wells and a treatment plant to contain and treat groundwater contaminated by VOCs and 1,4-dioxane. The treated water will then be discharged back to surface water or injected back into the underground aquifer, providing additional water resources to San Gabriel Valley residents.

“Today’s order will protect the essential drinking water supplies in the San Gabriel Valley. The treatment system is designed to intercept the most highly contaminated groundwater plume and prevent it from migrating further.” said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. “Once again, EPA is taking action requiring the company responsible for the pollution to pay for its cleanup in Puente Valley.”

Northrop Grumman has already spent over $10 million implementing cleanup activities at the former Benchmark Technology facility through a facility-specific Cleanup and Abatement Order issued by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board in 1989. The Water Board has agreed to transfer lead oversight to EPA in order to better coordinate the three groundwater cleanup projects currently ongoing in the Puente Valley. The other two projects are the shallow zone remedial action north of Puente Creek and the intermediate zone remedial action. Northrop Grumman is also performing the intermediate zone remedial action under a 2009 consent decree with EPA.

The contaminated groundwater associated with all of the San Gabriel Valley sites lies under significant portions of Alhambra, Irwindale, La Puente, Rosemead, Azusa, Baldwin Park, City of Industry, El Monte, South El Monte, West Covina, and other areas of the San Gabriel Valley. There are 45 water suppliers in the Valley that use the San Gabriel Basin groundwater aquifer to provide 90 percent of the drinking water for over one million people.

The groundwater was contaminated by more than 60 companies that used volatile organic compounds for degreasing, metal cleaning and other purposes. The EPA

listed several sections of the San Gabriel Valley as Superfund sites in 1984, including multiple areas of groundwater contaminated by volatile organic compounds.

For more information on the EPA's Superfund program, visit: http://www.epa.gov/region09/waste/sfund/ [1]

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