
July 8, 2022
Sent via Email

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Public Inquiry Unit
California Department of Justice
Attorney General's Office
P.O. Box 944255
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Subject: Conflict-of-Interest of CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld

Dear Attorney-General Bonta,

I request that your office conduct a conflict-of-interest investigation into CalEPA Secretary, Jared Blumenfeld.

In episode 65 of his podcast, <https://www.podshipearth.com/grace>, he interviews Melissa Bumstead, a West Hills resident. Melissa's daughter, Grace, has suffered from leukemia since 2013, which I believe, is currently in remission. While I have heartfelt sympathy for Grace and Melissa, as I do for any children with cancer, I do not share Melissa's belief that it was caused by the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL).

Unfortunately, by giving Melissa a platform on his podcast, including playing clips from the History Channel and NBC-4, Mr. Blumenfeld makes it plain that he shares Melissa's belief. That is an inappropriate position for an agency head to take on a public forum. His own sub-agency, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), recently stated in a public meeting,

*"To date, DTSC has not found any evidence that contamination from research and testing operations at SSFL has posed or would pose a threat to human health or the environment outside the SSFL site boundaries."*¹

DTSC does not make that statement lightly, but it is based on extensive review and confirmation of data including decades of off-site sampling and community health studies.

Mr. Blumenfeld clearly states on his podcast website that, *"The views contained in this podcast are Jared's and do not represent [the views of] the State of California."* However, he cannot simply brush aside his obvious bias that is in direct conflict with the scientists of his own agency, that is

¹ DTSC, "Update Regarding Offsite Investigations", April 2018. Available at https://www.dtsc-ssfl.com/files/lib_pub_involve/meeting_agendas/meeting_agendas_etc/67734_Update_Regarding_Offsite_Investigations.pdf. Accessed July 8, 2022.

overseeing cleanup at SSFL. Melissa calls DTSC's scientists liars, though she judiciously avoids that accusation in the podcast.



Courtesy: Ventura County Star 9/10/2018

Mr. Blumenfeld is too smart to say outright, *"I agree with you that SSFL caused your daughter's cancer."* He limits himself to softball questions and expressions of sympathy. However, in his scripted wrap-up he says, *"We are learning more about the environmental causes of cancer and diseases each day. By preventing pollution in the first place and by truly and quickly cleaning up the toxic legacies of the past, we have a prayer of stopping many forms of cancer before they start."* Taken in isolation, there is nothing wrong with this statement, indeed it is aspirational. However, when given at the end of this podcast, it speaks volumes about Mr. Blumenfeld's true opinion on the podcast's story. At best, this podcast shows a serious lack of judgement on Mr. Blumenfeld's part, and at worst, suggests a deeply held bias, at odds with his own agency.

As full disclosure, I am also a West Hills resident, and former SSFL employee. The views expressed in this letter are mine, and mine alone, and do not represent the views of The Boeing Company, the Department of Energy, or NASA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phil Rutherford".

Phil Rutherford

cc

CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld via email
DTSC Director Meredith Williams via email