

# *Hunters Point Shipyard Land Transfers On Hold As Toxic Waste Cleanup Investigated*

By John Shutt, [www.hoodline.com](http://www.hoodline.com) September 22, 2016

Regulators from the Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Toxic Substances Control have told the Navy to stop transferring land from the Hunters Point Shipyard to developers while agencies investigate the extent of the falsification of data about the cleanup of toxic and radioactive materials at the site. The regulatory action was first reported [in the Ingleside-Excelsior Light](#) last week, and stemmed from investigations into Navy contractor Tetra Tech.

NBC Bay Area [reported earlier this year](#) that a former Tetra Tech employee said he had been told to swap potentially contaminated soil samples for clean ones, dump potentially contaminated soil into open trenches around Hunters Point, sign falsified documents submitted to the government, and tamper with computer data about radiation levels. Other former workers said they were fired in retaliation after reporting violations to regulators.

The shipyard was declared a superfund site by the Environmental Protection Agency due to contamination from the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory, located there from 1948 through 1969, and toxic waste left over from industrial use. The Navy is obligated to clean land at the shipyard before it is turned over for development.

EPA regional spokesperson Michele Huitric confirmed that investigations into Tetra Tech are ongoing, and said the EPA was aware of investigations by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Navy. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission previously recommended a fine against Tetra Tech after they found the company had deliberately falsified data.

Part of the shipyard declared safe by regulators has already been transferred to developer FivePoint, a spinoff of Lennar Corporation, which is [building residential housing](#). A FivePoint spokesman said that the Tetra Tech whistleblower reports are not related to Parcel A, the land they are building on.

“Parcel A was transferred in 2004, several years prior to the alleged soil mishandling, and after the Navy, USEPA, and State of California determined the property was cleaned up and safe for transfer,” said FivePoint spokesperson David Satterfield. “Parcel A was removed from the National Priorities List at that time and is no longer considered a federal superfund site.”

Bradley Angel from environmental activist group Greenaction said that he had confronted FivePoint officials at a recent sales event about the cleanup, and had been shown documents that indicated Tetra Tech worked on at least part of Parcel A.

“They took us into the back room and took out three big binders and opened the first one, and of course the first sentence was about Tetra Tech’s work at the Shipyard, but not, of course, about falsification of soil samples,” Angel said.

[San Francisco Magazine reported](#) yesterday that a July email from the Navy indicated that Tetra Tech may have done sampling on Parcel A.

Greenaction [has called for](#) Tetra Tech to be fired and for an independent investigation of toxin and radiation levels at the shipyard and in the surrounding area.

UC Santa Cruz researcher Dan Hirsh, part of a team preparing a report on the cleanup, said that not only had Tetra Tech falsified soil samples, the Navy has been using outdated remediation standards that allow [much higher levels of toxic material](#) than the EPA currently recommends—in some cases about 100 times higher—and radiation levels equivalent to 12 chest x-rays per year for residents.

“We found over and over again that the Navy used standards that EPA said they aren’t supposed to use,” Hirsh said.

Mayor Ed Lee and Supervisor Malia Cohen [wrote to the Environmental Protection Agency](#) on Sept. 19th requesting a meeting.

“The environmental cleanup of the property is a critical first step in the process of developing Hunters Point Shipyard—a project that will deliver desperately needed housing and long-overdue public benefits to the Hunters Point community,” read the letter. “For that reason, we are requesting a briefing with senior Environmental Protection Agency leadership, confidential if necessary, so that we may better understand the scope and timelines of the investigations, and any potential impacts to the overall schedule for the delivery of these public benefits.”

The Shipyard development is a major piece of [the city’s strategy](#) for developing the southeastern waterfront. FivePoint plans to build 1,400 units of housing on the land that has already transferred, but thousands of additional units are now in limbo.