

Plating Company Expert Services

Los Angeles County, California

Client

Confidential Client

Highlights

- ◆ Soil, soil vapor, and groundwater impacts
- ◆ Provided expert testimony on release timing and location
- ◆ California State Superior Court ruled in favor of our client

DBS&A was retained by a law firm in Los Angeles to assist with an insurance litigation case involving soil, soil vapor, and groundwater impacts at a plating company dating back to the 1950s. For more than 40 years, aircraft components, automobile parts, locking mechanisms, and similar products were manufactured and electro-plated on the property.

Chlorinated solvents were used at several locations at the site for cleaning parts before electro-plating. Several vapor degreasers were purchased, installed, and maintained for pre-plating lines. Solvents were purchased, shipped to the site, and directed to a drum storage area designated in the company's southern parking lot. Spent solvent was also kept in the drum storage area.

During a routine inspection, the State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) noticed stained soil in the vicinity of the drum storage area. The RWQCB ultimately requested the company to complete several soil and groundwater investigations to delineate soil, soil vapor, and groundwater quality at the property. Impacts due to solvent use and storage were identified at several locations at the site.

To ascertain whether insurance coverage was applicable to site solvent releases, DBS&A was asked to provide an opinion on the location, nature, and timing of site solvent release(s), if any. Based on witness testimony regarding the history of solvent use at the site, site aerial photo reviews, the history of solvent detections in site subsurface media samples, and modeling of solvent release travel times, Dr. Stephen J. Cullen provided an expert opinion at trial as to the timing and location of site solvent releases to the subsurface. Dr. Cullen also opined as to whether subsurface solvents were present as dense nonaqueous phase liquids (DNAPLs). Dr. Cullen testified that a portion of the site subsurface impacts were due to releases that originated from offsite. The California State Superior Court ruled in favor of our client.



DBS&A provided an expert testimony on the timing and location of site solvent releases to the subsurface.



Chlorinated solvents were used at several locations at the site over the years for cleaning parts before electro-plating.

