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Kathleen Flynn
3725 Starview Drive, #4
San Jose, CA 95124

Re: Research on Car Wash Chemicals and Odors

Dear Kathleen:

As part of your appeal, I researched the chemicals used in car washes to seek how they affect odors. Newer car washes generally use several chemicals including high PH pre-soaks, wheel cleaners and waxes. They act as surfactants, detergents, and general cleaning agents. It requires a variety of chemicals to clean a car in a standard car wash.

The chemicals produce odors on their own and in combination with each other. Apparently the odors can be quite strong and, depending on conditions, can carry for a good distance. Car wash staff are usually required to wear masks when dispensing the chemicals.

It is my understanding that these chemicals combined with the soil, grease, tar, etc., from the car wash process drain into a reclaim area, commonly known as a "pit". The pit is pumped out periodically to a HAZMAT disposal facility. Between pump outs, which can be up to six months, the effluent can produce a very unpleasant stench caused by bacterial growth and the accumulation of heavy metals. Because the pits are not able to be sealed off completely due to venting requirements, there is no way to block the odors from escaping. Also, the odors emanate from both sides of the car wash tunnel as there is not a way to mitigate the fumes dispersing from both the entrance and the exit.

Though the industry is supposed to be improving in this regard, at this time there are no odor-free car wash chemicals according to my research.

Very truly yours,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the handwritten signature of Benjamin R. Levinson.

Benjamin R. Levinson