

# **2025 DTSC Joint Oversight Hearing Witness Biographies**

## **Panel 1: Updates from the Newsom Administration on DTSC Reform**

### **Katherine Butler, MPH**

*Director of DTSC*

Katherine Butler, MPH is a seasoned leader who upholds her commitment to strong enforcement, transparent government, and collaborative solutions for DTSC's decision making to protect California's environment and communities. For nearly two years, Katherine served as Deputy Director of the Hazardous Waste Management Program. In that role, she created a solution-oriented culture that led to action on several of the most complex long-standing permitting decisions facing the department. Prior to joining DTSC, Katherine was the Senior Health Deputy in the Office of County Supervisor Janice Hahn. During the most challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic, she served as the Personal Protective Equipment Lead for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

### **Andrew Rakestraw, J.D.**

*Chair of the Board of Environmental Safety*

Andrew Rakestraw has dedicated himself to a career in public service, and using law, science, and policy to tackle the most challenging environmental problems while protecting the most vulnerable communities. Andrew earned his JD from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, and worked in several sectors of the Federal Government. He served in the U.S. Department of State, the Department of State Office of the Legal Adviser, and in the Office of Special Presidential Envoy for Climate under John Kerry. In these roles, Andrew partnered with other countries, NGOs, and industry to advance climate ambition and environmental justice.

## **Panel 2: Perspectives on DTSC Permitting and the Hazardous Waste Management Plan**

### **Dawn Koepke**

*McHugh Koepke Padron on behalf of the California Council for Environmental & Economic Balance (CCEEB)*

Dawn Koepke is a legislative, budget, and regulatory lobbyist and partner at McHugh Koepke Padron. She manages the research strategy development, coalition building, and lobbying needs of the firm's clients in the policy areas of natural resources, environmental safety, chemical

management, hazardous waste, permitting, recycling, public safety, health and human services, and education. Dawn also serves as co-chair for the Green Chemistry Alliance. Dawn has a master's degree in public policy and administration from California State University, Sacramento and a bachelor's degree in international relations from San Francisco State University.

**Angela Johnson Meszaros**

*Senior Attorney, Community Partnerships Program, Earthjustice*

Angela has spent over 30 years working in the Los Angeles region to stop health and environmental harms caused by hazardous waste. Angela's work involves campaigns incorporating legal, legislative, and communications tools in partnership with front-line community leaders. Angela has served communities in various roles including in the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee for the Implementation of AB 32, the California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, and at the University of Southern California's Sustainable Cities Program. Angela holds both a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a JD from the University of Southern California.

**Panel 3: Perspectives on Source Reduction and Toxics in Consumer Products**

**Ivana Castellanos, MPH**

*Toxics Coordinator, Physicians for Social Responsibility – LA*

Ivana focusing on addressing the effects of toxic chemicals and plastics on frontline communities. She coordinates and provides project management and policy organizing support the Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy (CHANGE) and Environmental Justice Communities Against Plastics coalitions. She is a public health practitioner who is committed to addressing health inequities, environmental injustices, and systemic racism. Ivana's prior experience includes serving as a policy analyst with the American Public Health Association's Center for Public Health Policy. Ivana holds a Master of Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Princeton University.

**Avinash Kar, J.D.**

*Senior Director, Toxics, Natural Resources Defense Council*

Avi Kar joined NRDC in 2007, and previously directed state health policy, working with NRDC teams and external coalitions to advance policies to reduce exposures to toxics. Since joining NRDC, Kar's work has spanned toxics and food issues, covering toxics in consumer products, regulation of harmful chemicals, hazardous air pollutants, and California drinking water standards. Before joining NRDC, Kar worked at the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment. He received his bachelor's

degree from Williams College and his JD from the University of California's Hastings College of the Law. He is based in San Francisco.

**Nicole Quiñonez**

*Madden Quiñonez Advocacy on behalf of the Household & Commercial Products Association (HCPA)*

Nicole Quiñonez, partner at Madden Quiñonez Advocacy, has been a legislative advocate in California since 2012. Nicole focuses on the firm's business clients including the Household & Commercial Products Association, the Fragrance Creators Association, and individual consumer product manufacturers. She is co-chair for the Green Chemistry Alliance, an industry coalition working on the implementation of the Safer Consumer Products Program. Nicole has worked at Randlett, Nelson Madden, Crocker & Crocker, Porter Novelli and the CA Department of Consumer Affairs. Nicole has a degree in political science from the University of California, Davis.