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Suit alleges Mirasol Village construction contaminated nearby cannabis grow



Image: Sacramento Business Journal

The Mirasol Village mixed-income project in Sacramento's River District under construction in 2021. An active lawsuit contends a banned pesticide in the soil at the Mirasol Village site stirred up during construction contaminated a nearby indoor cannabis growing operation.

DENNIS MCCOY | SACRAMENTO BUSINESS JOURNAL



By [Ben van der Meer](#) – Senior Reporter, Sacramento Business Journal
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Story Highlights

- Betty Mitchell's cannabis operation failed state pesticide testing due to chlordane soil contamination.
- Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Richard K. Sueyoshi allowed Mitchell to pursue negligence and fraud claims.
- Mitchell's suit alleges Mirasol Village construction stirred up banned insecticide from the former Twin Rivers public housing site.

An active lawsuit contends dirt stirred up by construction of Mirasol Village in Sacramento led to the failure of an indoor cannabis growing operation at a

nearby property.

Plaintiff Betty Mitchell said she's encouraged after Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Richard K. Sueyoshi made several case rulings in recent weeks allowing her to continue to pursue negligence, fraud and punitive damage claims against the defendants.

"The decision was made not to remediate the site," said Mitchell, a social worker who specializes in assisting the unhoused. "I'm an unintended consequence."

Mitchell's suit, first filed in April 2025, contends the soil at the site of Mirasol Village in Sacramento's River District contained chlordane, a synthetic insecticide used for about 40 years before the federal government banned it in 1988.

She said operators annually used it on the site when it was first military housing and then the Twin Rivers public housing project. Twin Rivers was demolished in 2018 and 2019 for development of Mirasol Village, a [mixed-income community](#) of 427 units on the same property.

In 2017, Mitchell got a lease for an indoor cannabis growing and cultivation operation at 301 Dos Rios St., just west of where construction [was planned](#) for Mirasol Village between Dos Rios and North 12th streets.

Three years later, according to the suit, cannabis from Mitchell's operation began failing state-mandated pesticide testing because of the presence of chlordane.

After determining it wasn't because of the clones she was using to start her plants or the pesticide being on the property, Mitchell said, a friend who worked at the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency told her dirt stirred up and blown around by work on Mirasol Village could be the culprit. SHRA is the oversight agency for the project and the property.

Samples of soil at the site at different times, including after some people had moved into Mirasol Village units, tested positive for chlordane, Mitchell said.

Her original suit alleged SHRA, project developer McCormack Baron Salazar, general contractor Teichert and subcontractor Midstate Construction Corp. ignored the soils issue. Over two years, Mitchell's since-closed cannabis operation had \$491,000 in losses, the suit claims.

Representatives for Teichert and SHRA said they couldn't comment on the case, citing active litigation. McCormack Baron Salazar and Midstate Construction didn't return messages seeking comment on the suit.

Sueyoshi's tentative rulings in March 2026 removed SHRA from the case but gave Mitchell leave to file an amended complaint, which she did April 16.

"On or about March 4, 2020, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control ("DTSC") issued a formal comment letter regarding the Twin Rivers Triangle property confirming review of environmental materials and calling for additional investigation and scoping," the amended complaint states. "Those materials identified multiple categories of chemicals of potential concern, including organochlorine pesticides, a class that includes chlordane."

As a result, the complaint states, the defendants were aware the site wasn't clean but continued work anyhow.

Mitchell said she's realistic about her suit; she expects attorneys for the defendants to continue fighting the case for at least another year before offering her any settlement.

She said she also doesn't expect SHRA or the defendants to go back and remediate Mirasol Village, where construction was completed in 2024.

But SHRA has discussed similar redevelopment efforts for two other Sacramento public housing projects, [Marina Glen and Alder Vista](#), south of Broadway. Mitchell

said she hopes the suit will compel further testing, and if necessary remediation, as part of those redevelopments.

"Nobody knows. Nobody was reading that stuff," she said of documentation of chlordane at Twin Rivers. "What they underestimated was me."