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Superfund aid is sought for Silicon Valley

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WASHINGTON — Three Silicon Valley congressmen have asked William D. Ruckelshaus, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to include the entire valley on the list of toxic waste sites eligible to receive money from the federal Superfund program.

Norman Mineta and Don Edwards, both San Jose Democrats, and Ed Zschau, a Los Altos Republican, signed the letter that was sent Tuesday.

'Spread unchecked'

"So far, over 120 toxic waste leaks have been identified in the county," the congressmen said. "The sources and spread of these leaks have proven difficult to locate and numerous unmapped plumes of contaminants have continued to spread unchecked through the ground around the local aquifer system."

A similar letter was sent to Carole A. Omorato, chairwoman of the state Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento. The three congressmen said that state and local officials are already working on the problem, but that they didn't believe it could truly be solved without money from the \$1.6 billion Superfund.

Priority list

They also acknowledged that efforts already are under way to add some of the most dangerous Santa Clara Valley sites to the Superfund national priority list, but said that because of the large number of leaks and the difficulty in identifying the source of each leak, the entire area should be put on the priority list.

A bill appropriating this year's money for the Superfund is scheduled to come to the House floor Thursday, and Mineta's office said he will introduce two amendments to the legislation. One would put contaminated wells at the top of the priority list. The second would require doubled protection for underground waste storage tanks.