



State Water Resources Control Board

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Lawsuit Filed Against TravelCenters Gas Stations for Violations of Leak Prevention Requirements for Underground Storage Tanks

SACRAMENTO- The state Attorney General's Office, on behalf of the State Water Resources Control Board, has filed a complaint against TravelCenters of America LLC and their affiliates (TA) for leak prevention violations related to underground storage tanks (USTs) at TA's diesel and gasoline facilities in Merced and Kern Counties. The penalties could result in the multi-millions of dollars. The action was filed in Alameda County Superior Court based on inspections by local and state regulators. The Attorney General seeks a permanent injunction, civil penalties, and other equitable relief.

During the last several years, inspectors observed numerous violations that directly threatened the environment under and around the fueling stations. These violations include failure to perform monitoring within the required time period, inoperable or missing line leak detectors, failure to install or maintain UST monitoring systems or sensors, failure of the primary containment to store the hazardous substance, failure to maintain overfill prevention, and liquid in the secondary containment.

The lawsuit involves six fueling facilities located in Merced and Kern Counties, which are owned and/or operated by the defendants. The fueling facilities operate under the "TravelCenters of America", "TA" and "Petro" brand names and provide diesel and gasoline fuel, truck repair and maintenance services, convenience stores, and restaurants. The lawsuit seeks civil penalties for numerous violations documented by local and state agencies. Applying the minimum civil penalty of \$500 per day for each violation, the penalties could result in the multi-millions of dollars.

This lawsuit comes on the heels of enforcement actions taken against TA by three District Attorney offices for violations of UST laws. Riverside County's District Attorney Office filed a complaint against TA on July 10, 2008. Tehama County's District Attorney Office reached a \$300,000 judgment against TA on April 3, 2009 for operation and maintenance violations which led to a 900 gallon release of diesel fuel into a tributary of the Sacramento River in Tehama County. San Bernardino County's District Attorney Office reached a \$980,000 judgment against TA on December 17, 2009 for leak prevention violations.

This lawsuit is the latest in a series of enforcement actions that the State Water Resources Control Board's Office of Enforcement, represented by the California Attorney General's Office, has jointly brought against violators of California leak prevention laws. A copy of the complaint can be found on the State Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/ta_complaint.pdf