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**May  
1995**

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**State Water Resources Control Board  
Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund**

**A LEGISLATIVE REPORT  
95-2CWP**

**Blythe  
Environmental Remediation  
Demonstration Project**

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
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## Introduction

Senate Bill No. 108 (Chapter 296, Statutes of 1994) added Section 25299.82 to the Health and Safety Code which directs the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to establish the Blythe Environmental Remediation Demonstration Project (Demonstration Project) in conjunction with the City of Blythe and the County of Riverside. That law also requires the SWRCB to report to the Legislature on the status of the Demonstration Project no later than May 1, 1995

## The Project

The purpose of the Demonstration Project is to identify the locations of petroleum releases from underground storage tanks within the City of Blythe, provide estimates regarding the amount of funding needed to remediate those releases, identify potential funding mechanisms, and recommend the nature and extent of corrective action and plume management that may be necessary. The sum of \$160,000 was appropriated to conduct the Demonstration Project.

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## Report of Activities

The SWRCB initiated a contract with the City of Blythe in August 1994, which was executed and approved on October 21, 1994. The scope of work specified that the City would hire and manage the day-to-day activities of a technical contractor who would perform the study. The SWRCB's role would be primarily to provide technical assistance and advice through monthly meetings, review reports, and to take the lead in reporting to the Legislature. A final report was to be available by March 15, 1995.

The City solicited proposals, and subsequently retained the services of Holguin, Fahan and Associates, an environmental engineering firm from Costa Mesa, to perform the work. A final work plan for the contractor was agreed upon on October 20, 1994, and work began immediately thereafter.

The contractor performed a background investigation and developed a base map and field investigation work plan. Among other things, the work plan called for performing a soil vapor survey along the Hobsonway Corridor with follow-up groundwater monitoring and hydropunch sampling as necessary to determine areas of commingled groundwater and free-product. Soil vapor sampling commenced in December and by the beginning of February 1995, over 650 soil vapor samples and 300 groundwater samples were taken and analyzed. The draft report on the investigation, which includes cleanup strategy recommendations and costs was completed mid-April 1995.



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## Problems Encountered

To date, the only significant issue to surface is the status of regulatory obligations during the study for both existing and newly discovered releases. When the study was initiated, a large number of cleanup cases were in progress within the study area, and continuation of work on those cases would likely be unproductive if a community-wide cleanup ensues. The question arises, how should the regulatory agency proceed during this interim?

The same concern also applies to releases newly discovered during the project. Under normal procedures, a responsible party is directed to proceed with corrective action soon after a release is discovered. However, because of the potential for a community-wide cleanup, it would not make sense to proceed beyond the initial abatement and investigation stages.

The identification of new releases is also sensitive because of the significant financial consequences to the associated responsible party. Any similar future study could proceed more smoothly if it were known early on whether all new releases were going to be eligible for state funding. This would provide an incentive to parties to fully disclose information on historic property uses involving underground storage tanks. More discussion on these problems will be included in the final report.

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## Conclusion

The Demonstration Project is progressing well. The SWRCB is reviewing a draft report on the field investigation and release identification effort. Following review of the draft and submittal of a final report, the SWRCB will transmit its findings to the Legislature with the submittal of the September 1995 UST Cleanup Fund Annual Report to the Legislature.

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**Blythe Environmental Remediation  
Demonstration Project Report to the  
Legislature - May 1995**

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