



Media Release

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Draft Hinkley Groundwater Cleanup Environmental Impact Report Available for Review

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The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) today released a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the effects of removing hexavalent chromium from groundwater in Hinkley, San Bernardino County.

The draft EIR outlines six alternatives to remove hexavalent chromium from the groundwater, and considers the potential impacts from each of the alternatives. The main difference between the alternatives is the speed at which the waste chromium is removed from the groundwater. One of the project goals is to restore the groundwater to background levels of chromium in the shortest amount of time feasible.

The information in the draft EIR shows that the fastest cleanup strategy increases environmental impacts, such as loss of desert tortoise habitat, lowering of groundwater levels in the project area, and temporary water quality degradation during treatment.

Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) operates a natural gas compressor station just southeast of Hinkley. Between 1952 and 1966, chromium-laden wastewater from the compressor station seeped into groundwater from unlined disposal ponds. PG&E is under orders from the Water Board to clean up the groundwater contamination.

The Water Board is seeking public input on the draft EIR. The review period for the draft EIR is from August 21 to October 19, 2012. Written comments should be submitted by 5 p.m. on October 19, 2012 to the Lahontan Water Board's South Lake Tahoe office, 2501 Lake Tahoe Boulevard, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. Comments may also be emailed to Anne Holden at aholden@waterboards.ca.gov.

Staff of the Lahontan Water Board will host two informational meetings to discuss the draft EIR: August 29, 2012 at 6 p.m. at the Hinkley School in Hinkley, and at the Lahontan Water Board's regular meeting starting at 7 p.m. on September 12, 2012 in Barstow.

Details on these meetings are available on the Lahontan Water Board's website at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>. A copy of the draft EIR and related documents can be viewed or downloaded at that web address, or call Anne Holden at (530) 542-5450 for more information about where to view the EIR or to receive a compact disc of the EIR.

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