



Enforcement News

Azad Amiri and Sarbjit S. Kang Banned from Owning or Operating Underground Storage Tank Facilities in California ***Defendants Agree to \$4.25 Million Settlement***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO – After a multi-year investigation by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), two El Dorado County businessmen accused of violating multiple underground storage tank (UST) requirements have been banned from owning or operating gas stations in California.

In a [settlement](#) with the Attorney General's office, Azad Amiri and Sarbjit S. Kang, along with 13 other defendants, also paid a combined \$1 million fine to the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement account. An additional \$3.25 million penalty will be suspended if the defendants comply with UST laws for five years.

The agreement comes following an investigation that began in 2006, involved 11 facilities in six northern California counties, and led to the 2014 [civil complaint](#) that listed a litany of egregious violations, among them: Operating facilities without permits; failing to conduct required testing and maintenance; failing to monitor for leaks; and unlawfully abandoning tanks.

Further, the defendants were alleged to have engaged in business practices designed to avoid liability, such as creating shell companies and abusing the discovery process. The State Water Board filed 19 motions and was awarded \$16,600 in monetary sanctions because of the defendants' efforts to impede the gathering of evidence.

"Tank owners and operators need to know that we will aggressively pursue individuals who violate the UST's leak prevention requirements," said Yvonne West, director of the State Water Board's Office of Enforcement.

The UST's regulations are designed to protect groundwater from contamination by ensuring that underground storage tanks are properly constructed, maintained, tested and monitored to prevent and detect leaks as soon as possible.

While Amiri is permanently barred from owning or operating gas stations in California and allowed only to serve as a consultant to Stars Holding, Kang's ban is conditional. He can own or operate one facility if it adheres to all UST laws and has a designated Environmental Coordinator to oversee compliance. If he fulfills the requirements for five years, he can own

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and operate additional facilities under the same conditions. However, if any of his facilities violate UST requirements, he will be permanently prohibited from owning or operating any gas stations in the state.

The State Water Board's investigation was a cooperative effort with Contra Costa County Health Services, El Dorado County Environmental Management Department, Placer County Department of Environmental Health and Human Services, Sacramento County Environmental Management Department, San Joaquin County Environmental Health Department, Yolo County Department of Environmental Health, Yolo County District Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Unit, and the Department of Toxic Substance Control's Office of Criminal Investigations.

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