

# State Water Resources Control Board

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## **Enforcement Action Taken Against Gas Station for Violating Environmental Protection Standards**

STATEWIDE COMPLAINT FILED AGAINST GOLDEN GATE PETROLEUM, BAY AREA/DIABLO PETROLEUM, WESTGATE PETROLEUM, AND NORTHGATE PETROLEUM FOR UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK (UST) VIOLATIONS

**SACRAMENTO-** State and local prosecutors have filed a complaint against Golden Gate Petroleum, Bay Area Diablo Petroleum, Westgate Petroleum, and Northgate Petroleum for mismanaging gasoline tanks. The complaint was filed in Contra Costa County Superior Court in response to numerous UST violations observed by state and local inspectors. The prosecutors seek a permanent injunction, civil penalties, and other equitable relief.

Over the past several years, investigators observed numerous violations that directly threatened the environment under and around the gasoline stations. These violations included tampering with safety monitoring sensors, inoperable or missing line leak detectors, liquid and debris in the secondary containment, failure to perform monitoring within the required time period, failure of visual and/or audible alarms, operating without a permit, and other statutory and regulatory offenses, including unfair business practices. The lawsuit involves more than 30 gas stations located throughout California owned or operated by the defendants. The lawsuit also seeks civil penalties for the hundreds of violations that the state and local agencies have documented. There is a minimum penalty of \$500 per day for each of the violations alleged. Thus the ultimate penalties could be in the multi-millions of dollars.

“The Waterboards will take aggressive enforcement action against UST violators who substantially threaten the environment and public safety,” said Reed Sato, Director of the State Water Board’s Office of Enforcement. “Our investigation found that these companies’ USTs have been systematically operated with little regard for the safety requirements which protect the communities and their water quality from the potential dangers of a gasoline release to the environment.”

General's Office preceded this lawsuit. Also involved in the actions are the District Attorney's Offices in Alameda, Butte, Colusa, Contra Costa, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, and Yuba Counties.

The lawsuit is the latest in a series of major enforcement actions that the Attorney General's Office and local prosecutors have jointly brought against violators of California UST laws. To date, these actions have resulted in numerous multi-million dollar penalties and extensive corrective action by the violators.

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