

State Water Resources Control Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 3, 2005
SWRCB 05-001

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Water Board Orders Immediate Exxon Mobil Cleanup

Sacramento - The Central Valley Water Board has ordered cleanup of a neighborhood in Dos Palos due to high concentrations of gasoline and diesel fuel by-products found just below the surface and near at least one home.

The Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Board has issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order to Nicoletti, Oil, Inc. and Exxon Mobil Corporation for the cleanup of groundwater polluted with high concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbons, including benzene, a known human carcinogen. Recent sampling of soil and groundwater has found gasoline and diesel fuels (product) floating on the top of the groundwater table close to one of the homes, and within 3.6 feet of the ground surface. Residents of homes located on top of the polluted groundwater may be at risk from vapors rising from the polluted groundwater and collecting inside of homes, as well as the risk of coming into contact with the waste in soil and the polluted groundwater, and the risk of eating foods grown in impacted soil. The plume of polluted groundwater and floating product may continue to expand. The plume has affected or threatens to affect the free use of property within this Dos Palos neighborhood and represents a nuisance or threat of nuisance.

“While studies of the extent and character of the contamination have been going on since 1995, the shallow depth of the contamination and the potential for human contact with the fuels has prompted this Cleanup and Abatement Order,” said Tom Pinkos, Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board. The investigation and characterization of the Nicoletti Oil facility was transferred to the Central Valley Water Board in March of 2003 from the Modesto Merced County Department of Environmental Health.

The polluted groundwater underlies Nicoletti Oil, at 2801 Blossom Street, Blossom Street, and several homes in the area.

There have been at least two releases of diesel fuel from the site of Nicoletti Oil between approximately 1963 and 1980 that contaminated subsurface soils. From 1946 until 1980, Mobil Oil Corporation owned the facility, which operated as a bulk fuel and retail fuel distribution site, and storage facility. The facility included both underground storage tanks and above ground storage tanks storing gasoline and diesel fuel. In 1980, Nicoletti Oil, Inc., which had operated the facility for several years, purchased and then continued to operate the facility.