PUBLIC NOTICE
CLOSURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CASE
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY – PORTOLA
(SITE CLEANUP PROGRAM CASE
GLOBAL ID: T10000000278)

This will serve as notice that the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) is soliciting comments from the public regarding the pending closure of a Site Cleanup Program case, Union Pacific Railroad Company, at 1 Park Street, Portola, Plumas County.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENT PERIOD

17 February 2026 through 17 March 2026

SUMMARY:

Petroleum hydrocarbon contamination at 1 Park Street, Portola, Plumas County (Site) is related to historic railyard operations dating back to 1906, which included train maintenance, fueling, and switching operations. According to a 2009 report from the consultant, CH2M Hill, residual contamination at the Site predominantly consists of dissolved Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons as diesel (TPH-D) in groundwater and light nonaqueous phase liquid (LNAPL) in soil. Central Valley Water Board staff (Staff) recommends closure of the following case:

Union Pacific Railroad Company
Site Cleanup Program
Global ID T10000000278.

Project history, rationale for closure, and the process for providing comments are discussed in this public notice.

SETTING

The Site is an approximately 147-acre property that is located on the southwest side of Portola, Plumas County, along the southern bank of the middle fork of the Feather River (Feather River). The Site is bounded by the Feather River to the north, residential and commercial areas of Portola to the southeast, and the slopes of the hills to the south.

The east and west boundaries of the Site are generally defined by the points where railroad siding tracks split from the two main tracks.

Investigation and Remediation Activities

According to a 2004 report from Kennedy-Jenks, the first environmental investigations conducted at the Site began in 1985 and were focused on the onsite waste oil ponds. The environmental impact of these ponds were assessed and mitigated in 1988.

In October 1994, a 350-gallon gasoline UST was removed from the northeast portion of the Site (known as leaking UST State ID #320033 with GeoTracker Global ID: T0606300032).

In 1998, a 1,000-gallon diesel UST was removed near the Shop area (known as leaking UST State ID #2273). Limited information regarding these removals is available.

Between 1995 and 2003, a total of 20 groundwater monitoring wells and 60 soil borings were installed to assess the petroleum contamination that was identified during the 1994 and 1998 removal events. Soil and groundwater samples were analyzed for TPH as gasoline (TPH-G), TPH-D, TPH as motor oil (TPH-MO), benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and total xylenes (BTEX), methyl tert-butyl either (MTBE), halogenated volatile organic compounds (HVOCs), and iron. Results confirmed the presence of petroleum hydrocarbon contamination, mainly LNAPL, TPH-G, and TPH-D.

In 2004, a Site investigation was conducted to further investigate the impacts of petroleum observed in the soil and groundwater. As part of the 2004 investigation, a total of 45 soil samples and 39 groundwater samples were collected and analyzed for TPH-G/D/MO, BTEX, and MTBE. Groundwater samples were analyzed as sampled, without filtration. Laboratory results indicated that the predominant TPH impact in Site soil and groundwater is TPH-D.

Evaluation of the potential remedial alternatives indicated that a Cutoff Wall combined with a groundwater extraction and treatment system (GETS) was the best option to manage subsurface petroleum in the southern portion of the Site. In addition to the Cutoff Wall and GETS, excavation of the impacted soil from two areas in the northern portion of the Site was recommended. The primary remedial objective identified for the GETS was to contain, recover, and dispose of subsurface TPH and LNAPL, and reduce the risk for migration of contaminants beyond the current plume boundary.

Between 14 September and 18 October 2006, a total of 15,660 yards of contaminated soil were removed from the Site. Approximately 1,130 yards of soil were stockpiled for reuse as clean fill material. Approximately 7,900 yards of hydrocarbon contaminated soil were hauled offsite to designated landfills, while the remaining 8,800 yards of soil were consolidated and stockpiled onsite. Initial stockpile sampling showed that the average TPH-D concentration was 813 mg/kg, with a maximum of 1,300 mg/kg. In February 2009, the stockpiled soil was removed from the Site.

By January 2008, the GETS was operational. On 30 January 2009, the Discharger submitted a *Treatment System Annual Waste Discharge Requirement Report,* which documented GETS operation during 2008. During the 2008 monitoring period, approximately 10 million gallons of water were treated and discharged. Approximately 55-gallons of LNAPL were recovered during a cleaning event (date unknown). No LNAPL was recovered after the cleaning event in 2008. The report states that "…the limited LNAPL recovery during this time is an indication of the inherently low LNAPL mobility throughout the site...").

A remedial investigation was performed in April 2009 with the objective of completing a conceptual site model (CSM) and corrective action plan (CAP) to determine a final soil and groundwater remedy. The CSM determined that the limited mobility of LNAPL near the Cutoff Wall is consistent with the highly viscous examples observed in the field. The low mobility is also supported by treatment plant data where limited LNAPL has been recovered from the GETS.

In 2023, Staff reassessed the cleanup goals for the Site and determined that the Aquatic Habitat ESL of 640 µg/L was appropriate since the Site's primary environmental receptor is the Feather River.

On 28 March 2025, the Discharger formally requested Site closure using the Low-Threat Underground Storage Tank Case Closure Policy (LTCP) as guidance. The closure request determined that the criteria for groundwater and vapor intrusion to indoor air have been satisfied and recommended the implementation of a soil and groundwater management plan as a mitigation measure for controlling direct contact with contaminants at the Site. Additionally, a land use restriction was proposed as a possible institutional control to limit exposure for future workers.

Estimated Pollutant Mass Removed

The GETS treated 17.6 million gallons of groundwater when it was operational from 2008 to 2017. 12-gallons of dissolved phase TPH-D and 55 gallons of LNAPL were recovered from that volume.

Additional petroleum contamination was removed via excavation. 17,510 yards of contaminated soil were excavated and disposed of in an offsite facility in total.

Rationale For Closure

The CAP demonstrated that under current Site conditions, the contaminant plume is largely contained upgradient of the Cutoff Wall with limited potential for migration. Groundwater flow may be deflected around the existing Cutoff Wall; however, the CAP demonstrated that the dissolved-phase plume was predicted to attenuate within a few hundred feet of the end of the Cutoff Wall (CH2MHILL, 2011).

Semiannual groundwater monitoring since 2011 indicates that TPH-D concentrations are generally stable or decreasing throughout the Site and have been below the aquatic habitat ESL of 640 µg/L since about 2016.

Natural attenuation processes taking place at the Site include dilution, dispersion, sorption, precipitation, volatilization, biodegradation, and abiotic transformation.

Rationale for closure following LTCP Criteria as guidance:

1. The Site is located within the Plumas County Water District.

2. The closest water supply well is approximately 200 feet up and cross gradient from the Site.

3. The nearest surface water body is the Feather River, which is located approximately 60 to 100 feet downgradient of the Site.

4. The unauthorized release consists only of petroleum.

5. Historical releases from USTs have not occurred since 1998 except for a 2016 diesel release, which was mitigated immediately. Most of the potential petroleum sources on Site were removed in 1985. A 350-gallon UST was excavated and removed in 1994, as was a 1,000-gallon UST in 1998.

6. Free product and secondary source removal have been completed to the maximum extent practicable through remediation efforts. The LNAPL in the southern portion of the Site will continue to act as a source for the dissolved TPH-D plume. However, semiannual groundwater data that was collected through 2025 shows dissolved TPH-D concentrations are stable or decreasing, TPH-D is not migrating beyond the source zones, and has naturally attenuated to below applicable screening levels.

7. A CSM has been developed and was used to assess the nature, extent, and mobility of the release.

8. Soil and groundwater have been sampled for MTBE and BTEX. Neither was identified as a constituent of concern at the Site.

9. A nuisance from the petroleum in soil and groundwater does not exist at the Site.

10. Under current Site conditions, the dissolved TPH-D plume is largely contained upgradient of the Cutoff Wall.

11. The property owner is willing to accept a land use restriction if the regulatory agency requires one as a condition of closure.

12. The Site is not an active commercial fueling facility; future releases are unlikely.

WHERE DO I SEND COMMENTS

General information and documents regarding the Site can be obtained from the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker web site at:
(https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov)
For best results, please enter **T10000000278** into the GeoTracker search bar.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can make an appointment to review case files in our office at the footer address. Appointments can be made during regular business hours, which are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday.

This letter serves as notice of a 30-day public comment period. Please send written comments to me at the footer address. To be timely, we must receive written comments by 5:00 pm, **17 March 2026**.

Please contact me at (530) 224-4995, Jack.Rayl@Waterboards.ca.gov, or the footer address with questions or comments.