

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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New Expanded Water Replacement Program in Place

Lahontan Water Board Ensures Clean Water for Hundreds of Hinkley Residents

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) today issued an amended Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) to allow Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) to implement a Voluntary Whole House Replacement Water Program in Hinkley, San Bernardino County, to meet the Water Board's requirements. This will result in PG&E's whole house replacement water program being expanded to hundreds of households.

The revised order suspends provisions of the original CAO issued by the Water Board, which required that PG&E provide whole house water to less than one hundred households impacted by chromium contamination. Under the new order, more than 200 households in the tiny community will receive whole house replacement systems that will provide them with water that meets drinking water standards. Residents may choose between a new installed (deeper) well or a combination reverse osmosis/ion exchange treatment system.

On June 6, 2012, PG&E submitted an improved Replacement Water Supply Feasibility Report to the Water Board providing information on alternative whole house water supply systems. This report will assist residents in selecting the best option for their individual homes. The Water Board and PG&E agreed to move forward with the program, which provides whole house water for more households than would have been eligible under the original order.

"We are very pleased with this agreement," said Water Board Executive Officer, Patty Z. Kouyoumdjian. "This means that more people will get clean water, and it avoids further delay for the households involved. We have a long road ahead on cleanup of the plume. The Water Board will continue to aggressively require PG&E to remove the contamination and return the groundwater to its natural conditions."

The revised CAO does not change or reduce PG&E's ongoing responsibility to clean up the contamination in the Hinkley area.

BACKGROUND: Between 1952 and 1966, PG&E used hexavalent chromium, also known as chromium 6, to fight corrosion in cooling tower water near Hinkley. The wastewater from the cooling towers was discharged to unlined ponds at the site. Some of the wastewater percolated to the groundwater, resulting in hexavalent chromium pollution. The chromium affects an area of groundwater more than five miles long and nearly two miles wide.

PG&E is under orders from the Lahontan Water Board to stop plume expansion and clean up the chromium plume. For more information, see the Water Board's website: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>

The revised CAO can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/projects/pge/index.shtml#wbo