

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PUBLIC MEETING ON CHROMIUM GROUNDWATER CLEANUP AT PG&E'S HINKLEY COMPRESSOR STATION

VICTORVILLE --The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) staff will hold an informal public meeting on March 6, 2007 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Hinkley Elementary School to describe groundwater chromium cleanup efforts at Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Hinkley Compressor Station. Water Board staff will discuss the nature of the chromium contamination and current and planned cleanup actions at the site. Representatives from PG&E will also be present to provide information on their activities.

PG&E's Compressor Station is located approximately two miles southeast of the town of Hinkley and a dozen miles west of Barstow in the Mojave Desert of San Bernardino County.

Between 1952 and 1966, PG&E used hexavalent chromium, also known as chrome 6, to fight corrosion in cooling tower water. 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 approximately two miles long and nearly a mile wide.

Hexavalent chromium is identified by the State of California as a cancer-causing chemical when inhaled. The State has established a drinking water standard for total chromium, and some groundwater in the area of the chromium plume significantly exceeds the standard.

The Lahontan Water Board has ordered PG&E to stop further migration of the chromium plume and to clean up the contamination. In response, PG&E has implemented several projects to control the plume and remediate the hexavalent chromium. Additional remediation projects are planned and will be discussed at the meeting.

The Lahontan Water Board protects and restores water quality in California east of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada crests from the Oregon border through the Mojave Desert.