



Enforcement News

Travel Centers of America to Pay \$500,000 for Violating Consent Judgment in Underground Storage Tank Case

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SACRAMENTO – Travel Centers of America and its affiliates (TA) have agreed to pay a \$500,000 penalty for breaking the terms of a consent judgment related to violations of the underground storage tank (UST) regulations.

The judgment, [issued in February 2014 in Merced County Superior Court](#), resolved violations alleged by the State Water Resources Control Board against TA that began in 2005. The alleged violations, which took place at six UST facilities in Kern and Merced counties, included failure to perform required testing and monitoring, and not installing leak prevention equipment. The facilities included service stations and truck stops.

Under the terms of the 2014 judgment, TA paid \$1 million in civil penalties and \$800,000 to the State Water Board for its enforcement costs. TA received \$2 million in credit for environmental improvements that enhanced compliance at its facilities, and an additional \$1 million in penalties was to be suspended if TA stayed in compliance with the requirements of the judgment for five years.

“Failure to comply with the UST leak prevention laws and regulations poses a substantial risk to the groundwater resources in California,” said Cris Carrigan, director of the State Water Board’s Office of Enforcement. “UST owners and operators need to be mindful that the Legislature has mandated significant penalties for UST owners and operators who don’t comply with leak prevention requirements.”

Between March 2015 and May 2017, the State Water Board reviewed annual status reports submitted by TA under the 2014 judgment. During its review the Board identified seven violations that allowed the suspended penalties to be reinstated. The alleged violations included failure to timely repair secondary containment after testing failures, failure to have an approved overfill prevention system, failure to timely perform an enhanced leak detection test and failure to have a line leak detector on a pressurized product line.

The State Water Board reached a [settlement agreement](#) with TA regarding the alleged violations. TA will pay \$500,000 of the \$1 million in penalties to the Cleanup and Abatement Account, with the remaining \$500,000 suspended if TA does not violate any UST laws or the terms of the settlement for the rest of the original five-year period.

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