



# Media Release

## **Garden Grove industrial facility penalized \$1.14 million for soil, groundwater contamination**

### ***Owner, operator repeatedly ignored cleanup orders***

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**RIVERSIDE** – The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board issued a \$1.14 million penalty against Cham-Cal Engineering Co. and Western Avenue Associates, L.P. for failing to comply with a [2016 Cleanup and Abatement Order](#).

Cham-Cal, the operator and owner of a facility in Garden Grove that manufactures commercial truck accessories, used and stored tetrachloroethene (PCE) in its vapor degreasing operation, resulting in repeated discharges of the suspected cancer-causing contaminant to soil and groundwater on industrial property owned by Western Avenue Associates.

The order required Cham-Cal and Western Avenue Associates to remediate the contaminated soil, soil vapor and groundwater beneath the facility and submit technical reports to the regional board. The companies instead failed to meet most of their deadlines and were penalized for submitting a late Interim Remedial Action Plan and neglecting to implement a Vapor Mitigation Plan to protect workers from inhaling PCE – a solvent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies as a probable human carcinogen.

“Our staff worked with Cham-Cal and Western Avenue Associates for several years trying to get them to comply with the cleanup and abatement order,” said Santa Ana Water Board Chair William Ruh. “Yet despite our efforts, the order’s requirements were not fulfilled. In addition to recovering the companies’ economic gains from noncompliance, this penalty should motivate Cham-Cal to clean up the site and deter other dischargers from engaging in similar behavior.”

Because of their continued noncompliance, Cham-Cal and Western Avenue Associates were subject to daily penalties of up to \$5,000 for each violation per the California Water Code and the State Water Resources Control Board’s Enforcement Policy. The companies are required to conduct a comprehensive investigation and remediate the contaminated groundwater after the PCE-impacted soil is cleaned up. If their decades-long pattern of noncompliance persists, they could be subject to additional penalties.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

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The Water Boards' mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and ensure proper allocation and efficient use for present and future generations. The [Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board](#) covers 2,800 miles of southern California terrain, portions of the Orange County coastline, 460 miles of streams, and over 17 lakes, as well as numerous groundwater basins that serve as important drinking water sources throughout the region.

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