



Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

PUBLIC NOTICE CLOSURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CASE

This will serve as notice that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board) is soliciting comments from the public regarding the pending closure of an environmental case at Pacific Street Right-of-Way, 150 Pacific Street, Portola, Plumas County (Site).

SUBJECT SITE:

150 Pacific Street, Portola, Plumas County.
Plumas County Assessor's Parcel No. 12607ROW.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENT PERIOD:

17 December 2024 through 15 February 2025

SUMMARY: The Site meets the requirements for closure under Groundwater-Specific Criterion (5)a of the Low-Threat Closure Policy¹. Based on an analysis of current and reasonably anticipated near-term site-specific conditions, Central Valley Water Board staff (Staff) concludes that the contaminant plume poses a low threat to human health and safety and the environment and water quality objectives will be achieved within a reasonable time frame.

Setting:

The Pacific Street Right of Way property (Site) is an asphalt-paved roadway located in the west frontage of 150 Pacific Street in the City of Portola, California, Plumas County Assessor's Parcel No. 12607ROW. The Site elevation is approximately 4,863 feet above mean sea level, with relatively flat topography. The Site is bounded by a commercial building to the west, extended roadway and sidewalk to the north and south, and the 3-way intersection of Pacific Street, Commercial Street, and California Street to the east. The footprint of the former USTs overlaps portions of the sidewalk, curb, and roadway along Pacific Street.

¹ State Water Resources Control Board, 1 May 2012, *Low-Threat Underground Storage Tank Case Closure Policy*.

Sensitive receptors within 2,000 feet of the Site include the Middle Fork Feather River located about 1,000 feet to the north, and three supply wells that serve the City of Portola's water system: the Corp Yard Standby Well located about 400 feet to the west, the Commercial Street supply well located about 1,000 feet to the east, and 6th and Pacific Standby Well located about 1,900 feet to the south.

A Site Cleanup Program site, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Portola Rail Yard (Global ID T1000000278) is located along the bank of the Middle Fork Feather River between the Site and the river. Multiple historic petroleum releases and cleanup actions have occurred at the rail yard.

Investigations and Remediation Activities

On 17 August 2016, two abandoned 8-foot long by 42-inch diameter USTs (approximately 200-gallon capacity each) were uncovered during road construction in the Pacific Street frontage of 150 Pacific Street. Their historic ownership, contents, and operational history are unknown, but due to the size and condition of the USTs, they were suspected to be former heating oil tanks. The Discharger estimates that the USTs had been inactive for more than 60 years².

The construction contractor reported a release of petroleum during excavation of these tanks. Subsequently, the following actions were taken:

- On 18 August 2016, a groundwater sample was collected from the excavation and analyzed for total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel, oil, gasoline, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, total xylenes (BTEX), and methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE).
- On 19 August 2016, the consultant collected two soil samples from beneath the USTs for analysis for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), metals, and TPH as diesel, oil, and gasoline. The soil samples were not analyzed for oxygenates or semi-volatile organics. The maximum reported TPH as gasoline concentration was 140 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg). Low levels of chromium, arsenic, barium, and lead were found in both samples. No VOCs were detected.

After UST removal, staining and petroleum odor were observed from the sidewalls and floor of the excavation suggesting additional contaminated soil may be present to an unknown depth and lateral extent. However, excavation activities were discontinued to complete the road construction project and eliminate traffic hazards. The excavation was lined with plastic and backfilled with cement slurry, clean soil, and cobble-size rock stabilization. The area was then repaved.

² City of Portola, 2021, [Letter to Central Valley Water Board](https://documents.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable_documents/2191297233/portola%2013267%20resp%20061821.pdf), 18 June.
(https://documents.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable_documents/2191297233/portola%2013267%20resp%20061821.pdf)

On 2 September 2016, PCEH referred the case to the Central Valley Water Board. In January 2018 and June 2019, the Discharger submitted Soil and Water Investigation Work Plans which Staff did not accept because it was insufficient.

On 13 May 2021, Staff issued 13267 Technical Reporting Order R5-2021-0806, which was revised on 3 March 2022, requiring subsurface investigation, groundwater monitoring, and submittal of a Soil and Groundwater Investigation Report. The Discharger was unable to procure the services of a qualified environmental consultant within the 28 October 2022 due date specified in the Order and was unable to comply because City resources were stretched following the July 2021 Dixie Fire.

Upon reconsideration of the 2016 soil and water samples results (discussed below), Staff determined the case is eligible for closure without further investigation.

RATIONALE FOR CLOSURE:

- Detected BTEX chemicals at the source in soil and groundwater were below the environmental screening levels (ESLs), which is consistent with the age of the release. The ratio of BTEX chemicals is consistent with weathered petroleum.
- Benzene and MTBE were not detected in groundwater.
- Groundwater concentrations of toluene, ethylbenzene and m,p xylene were less than Tier ESL 1 screening levels and will continue to degrade with time.
- The release has had no impact on the City's two municipal supply wells that are located within 400 feet and 1,000 ft of the USTs. All volatile organic compounds, including BTEX, were below laboratory detection levels for the years on record (2012 and 2021)³.
- Measurable impacts to the Middle Fork of the Feather River from this site are unlikely based on the petroleum releases documented at the neighboring UPRR SCP case site. Contaminant transport in this area is well understood due to investigative work done at this site.

WHERE DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

General information regarding the Site can be obtained from the State Water Resources Control Board's [GeoTracker](https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/) web site (https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=T10000009346).

³ [California Public Drinking Water Watch](https://sdwis.waterboards.ca.gov/PDWW/JSP/WaterSystemDetail.jsp?tinwsys_is_number=3481&tinwsys_st_code=CA) database, Drinking Water System CA3210003, Wells CA3210003-005-005 and CA3210003-006-006. (https://sdwis.waterboards.ca.gov/PDWW/JSP/WaterSystemDetail.jsp?tinwsys_is_number=3481&tinwsys_st_code=CA)

All interested agencies, groups and persons wishing to comment on the pending case closure must provide these comments in writing. The comments should be submitted **by 15 February 2024** to the Central Valley Water Board's office at 364 Knollcrest Drive, Suite 205, Redding, CA 96002. For information, please call Bill Bergmann at (530) 224-4852 or contact him by e-mail at William.Bergmann@waterboards.ca.gov.