19 March 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

CASE CLOSURE CONSIDERATION, UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK RELEASE, TOP FLIGHT PARTNERS, 9512 WEST AIRPORT DRIVE, VISALIA, TULARE COUNTY RB CASE NO. 5T54000534

This letter is to inform interested parties of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) consideration of closing the subject case (Site), and to request comments from interested parties.

The Top Flight Partners facility (Site) is in the northeastern part of the Visalia Municipal Airport property. The property is identified as Tulare County Assessor's Parcel Number 925-000-382-000. The Site is developed with a hanger building and asphalt paving. Two permitted underground storage tanks (USTs) installed in 1998 are near the southeast corner of the hanger building: one 11,000-gallon double wall steel jet fuel UST and one 4,000-gallon double wall steel aviation gas (Avgas) UST. Potable water is provided by the City of Visalia (California Water Service) public water system.

On 19 April 2022, a UST system release was discovered when the aviation gasoline (Avgas) fuel filter was found to be leaking. An O-ring was replaced and approximately 40 gallons of fuel were removed from the fuel filter sump box. During reconciliation of fuel usage on 30 April 2022, approximately 400 gallons of Avgas were reported to be missing. It was estimated that the UST system was pressurized and leaked for approximately 36 hours before the leak was discovered.

An initial Site investigation was conducted during February 2023 to determine if Avgas was present in soil. Slant hand auger borings were advanced north of, adjacent to and south of the fuel filter sump box. Hydrocarbon-stained soil was discovered beneath the sump box beginning at 5 feet below ground surface (bgs). Total petroleum as gasoline (TPHg) was detected at 2,990 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) in a sample collected at 6 feet bgs from beneath the sump box. TPHg and other gasoline constituents and additives, including ethanol, methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) and lead scavengers were not detected in samples from the other two borings.

One additional boring was sampled to a maximum depth of 45 feet below ground surface (bgs) during March 2024 adjacent to the filter sump near the location where Avgas was detected at a concentration of 2,990 mg/kg during February 2023. TPHg was detected at 16,700 and 4.25 mg/kg in the samples from 17 and 20 feet bgs, respectively. The Avgas additive EDB was detected in these samples at 9.24 and 0.169 mg/kg, respectively. Toluene and xylenes were also detected in the sample from 17 feet bgs at low concentrations. There were no other organic compound detections.

The consultant concluded that the vertical extent of the UST release was defined. The laboratory determined that the TPHg detection at 17 feet bgs was mostly not due to gasoline compounds. Remaining Avgas is within a silt layer from 16.5 to 23 feet bgs.

Four soil borings were advanced to a maximum depth of 25 feet bgs during October 2024 to complete determination of the lateral extent of Avgas in soil. A shallow angle boring was also drilled to resample contaminated soil beneath the filter sump for fuel fingerprint analysis. Analytical results were expected to determine whether the constituents detected resembled the weathered constituents detected at 17 feet bgs during the March 2024 investigation, or from the recent release under investigation. TPHg was not detected in the samples, except at low concentrations at 17 and 20 feet bgs. BTEX, fuel oxygenates, lead scavengers and naphthalene were not detected.

The consultant concluded that the vertical and lateral extent of Avgas is confined to a small area beneath the fuel filter sump. The estimate of 400 gallons of fuel lost during the release did not appear to be correct, based on the absence of detections in soil samples. Benzene, ethylbenzene and naphthalene were not detected in shallow soil samples during this and previous investigations. Avgas that remains from the release should not likely be a threat to human health and the environment.

Staff concluded that the Avgas constituents detected in a sample from 17 feet bgs during the March 2024 assessment are from a historic release. Fuel fingerprint analysis was conducted on the sample in which TPHg was detected at 16,700 mg/kg. The analytical laboratory concluded that the analytical data indicated low boiling point compounds, and chromatograph patterns associated with degraded Avgas. The relative abundance of volatile and semi-volatile constituents indicated substantial degradation by evaporative weathering. It is likely that the low concentrations detected at a similar depth nearby beneath the sump box are also degraded Avgas from an older release. There was no conclusive evidence of the estimated release of 400 gallons that migrated into soil beneath the filter box sump, or that there was even a release of that volume.

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted the *Low-Threat Underground Storage Tank Case Closure Policy* (Policy). This case has been evaluated for closure based on the evidence presented in the investigation reports and meets the relevant case closure criteria based on the fundamental principles contained in the Policy.

There should be no risk to human health and safety or the environment from the remaining petroleum product constituents, which are expected to degrade naturally. Groundwater was not affected. The nearest public water well is approximately 700 feet to the east and surface water bodies were not identified within 1,000 feet of the Site.

This Public Notice has been transmitted to the interested parties in the Site vicinity and relevant agencies, as well as posted on the Central Valley Water Board website available at (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/public_notices/) Underground Storage Tank – Decisions Pending, Case Closures. Details of the assessment are also available to interested parties through the State Water Board's GeoTracker website: (http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/).

You may participate in the case closure process by reviewing reports, asking questions, and providing comments on the proposed closure. The Central Valley Water Board's case number is 5T54000534.

Please submit any comments regarding the proposed case closure to the Central Valley Water Board's Fresno office by **19 May 2025**.

Interested parties with questions or comments regarding the Site or the proposed actions should contact the case worker, John Whiting at 1685 E Street, in Fresno at (559) 445-5504, or by email at John.Whiting@waterboards.ca.gov.
Upon completion of the public comment period, and in the absence of any substantive comments against closure, the Central Valley Water Board staff will direct that groundwater monitoring and remediation wells be properly destroyed and any remaining investigation derived waste be removed and properly managed. If no problems are discovered during a final Site inspection a case closure letter will be prepared.