

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT
STAFF: Keith Roberson
MEETING DATE: July 9, 2014

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: Refinery Oversight Program Update – Status Report

DISCUSSION: This update describes the Board's Refinery Oversight Program and summarizes its purpose, legal authority, implementation, and current goals and challenges.

The primary purpose of the Refinery Oversight Program is to protect water quality from discharges of petroleum hydrocarbons and refinery wastes to land. There are five petroleum refineries in the Region:

- Shell (Martinez)
- Chevron (Richmond)
- Valero (Benicia)
- Phillips 66 (Rodeo)
- Tesoro Golden Eagle (North Concord)

These refineries have operated in their original locations for between 50 and 120 years, and all have varied levels of soil and groundwater contamination beneath them as a result of this long operational history. This contamination is due to:

- refinery wastes that were discharged intentionally into industrial waste impoundments, known as waste management units (WMUs), which are regulated under chapter 15 and title 27 of the California Code of Regulations; and
- unauthorized historic discharges (i.e., unplanned spills and leaks) to land or water outside of designated WMUs, which are regulated under the Site Cleanup Program pursuant to the sections 13267 and 13304 of the State Water Code.

The Refinery Oversight Program is administered within the Waste Containment Section of the Board's Groundwater Protection Division. We regulate each refinery under Waste Discharge Requirements (for WMUs) and Site Cleanup Requirements (for historic spills and releases). Discharges of treated wastewater and stormwater at each refinery are regulated under NPDES permits within the Board's NPDES Division. Funding for staff oversight in the Refinery Oversight Program comes primarily from cost recovery agreements with the refinery owners.

Long-standing challenges for the Program include:

- preventing and detecting new releases to the environment from refinery operations and from existing WMUs;
- preventing offsite migration of existing subsurface contamination; and
- cleanup of WMUs and subsurface pollution while the refineries continue to operate.

New challenges for the program staff include preparing for the effects of sea level rise on low-elevation WMUs located along the Bay margin and closure of WMUs in low-lying areas where wetlands have become established.

**RECOMMEN-
DATION:**

This report is presented for information purposes only – no action is needed.