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WATER BOARD ORDERS CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GAS STATION TO PAY \$50,000 FOR POLLUTING GROUNDWATER

Sacramento – The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board today issued a penalty of \$50,000 against Abdul Ghafoor, owner, and Rajbir Sarkaria, operator, of the former Gas for Less Station in Antioch.

The owners allegedly failed to comply with Water Board orders to report on the investigation and cleanup of gasoline discharges to soil and groundwater from three leaking underground storage tanks.

“When we issue an order, dischargers need to be aware that it is a very serious step and it is important that the Regional Board follow up on noncompliance to maintain the integrity of the underground tank and other Board programs for all involved,” said Bob Schneider, Chairman of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

“We have not seen any action at all in this very serious matter, even where funds have been available to further this cleanup. As such a \$50,000 administrative civil liability for this case is a minimum, and if we don’t see compliance in the near future we’ll be back,” Schneider said.

When Contra Costa County Environmental Health officials removed three tanks of gasoline, staff saw holes in the tanks and found that gasoline had leaked into the soil under the tanks. Shallow groundwater has been polluted with high concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbons, including benzene, a known carcinogen, according to a preliminary investigation.

The polluted groundwater underlies the service station at 924 West 10th Street and extends off-site.

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