

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION

CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDER NO. 88-126  
AGAINST  
THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY  
Needles - San Bernardino County

The Executive Officer of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region finds that:

1. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, (hereinafter referred to as the discharger), One Santa Fe Plaza, 5200 East Sheila Street, Los Angeles, California, 90040, is the owner of the Needles railyard, located between River Road and Front Street, Needles, California, 92363.
2. A Complaint Report was received in this office on November 7, 1983 indicating that a diesel storage tank system had leaked and affected the ground water at the Needles railyard, and that fuel from the oil-water separator had been discharged into the City of Needles sewer line.
3. On November 23, 1983 Regional Board staff conducted a follow-up investigation which revealed the following according to the discharger:
  - a. A diesel fuel tank system was installed in 1938 with a defect, which allowed the fuel to leak until 1963 when the system was removed and the defect discovered.
  - b. There was a loss of fuel estimated at 2,000,000 gallons over a time period of 27 years. Most of the fuel was believed to have been lost to the Colorado River prior to its diversion to the east.
  - c. At the time the leak was discovered an estimated 250,000 gallons of free product was recovered from the ground water.
4. The Regional Board staff determined that the diesel contamination presents a threat to the quality of the ground water and the Colorado River.
5. By letter dated January 3, 1984 the discharger was requested to submit a technical report containing the results of an investigation, and plans for remediation, of the contamination. The report was to be submitted by February 1, 1984. In addition, the letter requested certification from the discharger by January 13, 1984 that existing storage tanks and piping are not leaking .
6. A letter dated January 18, 1984 was received from the discharger on January 23, 1984, certifying that there had been no leakage from the Needles railyard facility since 1959, and also that fueling of locomotives was discontinued that same year. The fuel unloading line and facilities, including the storage tank, were removed shortly thereafter, at which time a leak was discovered in the unloading line, according to the discharger. The discharger estimates the

amount of fuel remaining in the ground to be 50,000 gallons, and the amount of fuel recovered through 1970 to be 300,000 gallons. A time extension was requested to February 1, 1984 for submittal of a timetable of events and workplan. Regional Board staff granted verbal approval of this request.

7. By letter dated April 3, 1985 the discharger was requested to submit a progress report for the cleanup operation, including the preliminary and final design for the recovery system.
8. On April 9, 1985 the Regional Board received the report entitled, "Assessment of Soil and Ground Water Contamination - Needles, California", prepared by IT Corporation (consultant for the discharger) and dated January 1985. This was the final report for Phase I of the investigation.
9. The technical report described above was reviewed by Regional Board staff and the discharger was requested to submit additional subsurface information by letter dated May 23, 1985.
10. During the period between June 1985 through March 1988, the discharger's consultants performed extensive investigative work. Delays resulted in the investigation and preparation of the remediation plan when the discharger replaced IT Corporation with Environmental Solutions, Inc. as their consultant. Further delays resulted in development of a cleanup plan which required the pumping and disposal of large quantities of ground water. This included investigating water rights issues and disposal options.
11. On March 11, 1988 the Regional Board received a progress report from the discharger. The report included test results of free oil recovery from the ground water and an estimated submittal date for the final Phase II report. This submittal date was to be late March or early April 1988.
12. By letter dated May 31, 1988 the Regional Board requested the discharger to submit a technical report, containing interpretation of analytical results and a site mitigation plan by June 15, 1988.
13. On June 15, 1988 the Regional Board received the report entitled, "Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study for Oil Spill at Needles, California", prepared by Environmental Solutions, Inc. and dated June 1988, from the discharger. The report presented several cleanup alternatives. The recommended alternative consists of installing shallow, gravel-packed trenches with oil collection sumps.
14. The discharger has caused or permitted the discharge of waste into the water of the State and created a condition of pollution.
15. Section 13304 of the California Water Code states, in part, that:

"Any person...who has caused or permitted...any waste to be discharged or deposited where it is, or probably will be, discharged into the waters of the state and creates, or threatens to create, a condition of pollution or nuisance, shall upon order of the regional board cleanup such waste or abate the effects thereof or, in the case of threatened pollution or nuisance, take other necessary remedial action."

16. The Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region identifies the beneficial uses of the ground water in the Piute Hydrologic Unit as:

- a. Municipal
- b. Industrial
- c. Agricultural

17. Contamination of the ground water with diesel would significantly impair the beneficial uses of the ground water.

18. This enforcement action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15308 and 15321, Chapter 3, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that pursuant to Section 13304 of Division 7 of the California Water Code, the discharger comply with the following:

- 1. Cleanup or abate the effects of the discharge of diesel in the soil and ground water at the Needles railyard, Needles, California.
- 2. Submit to the Regional Board by September 30, 1988 a complete cleanup proposal for recovery of the free oil in the ground water, extraction of the contaminated ground water and cleanup of the contaminated soil.

ORDERED BY:

*Arthur Swajian*  
Executive Officer

*August 25, 1988*  
Date