



Oil Fields Program Fact Sheet

Fiscal Year (FY) 19/20

Overview of the Oil Fields Program

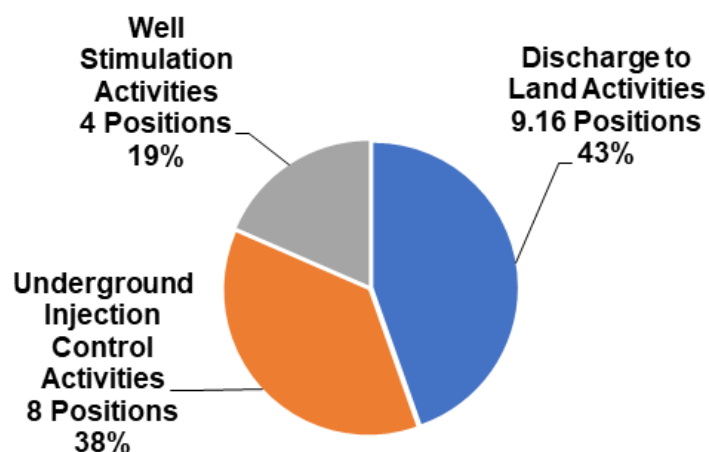
Most California oil production occurs in the Central Valley. Formation water produced with the oil, known as produced wastewater, comprises the largest volume of wastes generated by oil production. Produced wastewater is typically saline, and disposed of by land application, primarily ponds, or by underground injection. Some is recycled on crops. Other oil field wastes include drilling muds and solids and sludges generated when tanks and equipment are cleaned.

The Oil Fields Program employs 21 staff to regulate produced wastewater disposal and reuse, underground injection control (UIC) practices, and well stimulation practices (SB4) to ensure the protection of water quality.

Program Goals

Oil Field produced wastewater is often high in salts and boron and can contain significant amounts of organic compounds. Discharges to land (primarily ponds) have the potential to adversely impact beneficial use waters. Similarly, improperly sited underground injection control wells and stimulated wells have the potential to adversely impact beneficial use waters. The goal of the Oil Fields Program is to properly regulate oil field discharges and oversee monitoring activities to ensure the protection of surface and groundwaters and human health. This includes issuing effective regulatory orders for discharges to land and reviewing proposed aquifer exemption applications, UIC permits, and SB4 related groundwater monitoring programs to ensure permitted activities are protective of water quality.

Resources



FY 18/19 Accomplishments

- Adopted a cease and desist order for a large pond disposal system.
- Issued 13 Notices of Applicability (16 facilities) enrolling dischargers under Oil Field General Orders for Produced Wastewater Discharges to Land (GOs).
- Issued waste discharge requirements (WDRs) for a produced wastewater recycling project to ensure the protection of the underlying aquifer.
- Updated and/or amended six oil field WDRs.
- Commented on 14 pond closure plans.
- Completed 81 inspections.
- Reviewed six aquifer exemptions.
- Reviewed 52 UIC projects.
- Reviewed applications for 225 well stimulations where protected water is present.
- Reviewed 51 well stimulation groundwater monitoring plans, addendums, and exclusions.
- Facilitated three public and five working meetings/conference calls with the Food Safety Expert Panel.
- Oversaw six Food Safety crop sampling events.

Priority Projects FY 19/20

- Enrolling dischargers under one of the three GOs.
- Closing inactive ponds in a manner that is protective of water quality.
- Pursuing appropriate enforcement for oil field-related violations of the Water Code, including, but not limited to, violations of the Basin Plans, WDRs and GOs, and spills/leaks and other illicit discharges.
- Reviewing for enforcement pond facilities that threaten beneficial use waters.
- Overseeing quarterly Food Safety Expert Panel member meetings.
- Reviewing aquifer exemptions and proposed UIC projects to ensure the protection of water quality.
- Reviewing proposed well stimulation applications and groundwater monitoring plans to ensure water quality protection.