

73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 346-7491

Public Notice 7-12-26
Board Order R7-2012-0043
June 5, 2012

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR
CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDER (CAO) R7-2012-0043

IN THE MATTER OF
ESCHER OIL COMPANY (EOC)
Coachella, Riverside County

Mr. Leo Escher, owner of Escher Oil Company (EOC), hereinafter referred to as the Discharger, 72-713 Beavertail, Palm Desert, CA 92260, owned a 2.67 acre property site containing Above Ground Storage Tanks (ASTs), Underground Storage Tanks (USTs), assorted buildings, loading docks, and parking areas located at 85-119 Avenue 50, Coachella in Riverside County, California, Section 5, T6S, R8E (latitude 33.6858 /longitude -116.11290). In 2008, the property was sold to Beck Oil, Inc.

EOC is the former landowner and site operator, and is the primary responsible party for the purpose of cleaning up and abating the pollution at this property based on Regional Water Board records that document various petroleum spills having occurred when EOC was the owner and site operator. The Regional Water Board records indicate that the site may have been established in the 1950s, and may have originally had eight ASTs and eight USTs.

The Regional Water Board records indicate the groundwater beneath the site has been adversely impacted for over 25 years by petroleum hydrocarbons. Despite modest efforts to cleanup and abate the pollution of on-site hydrocarbon impacted soils, the groundwater remains polluted by previous EOC on-site operations, including a significant amount with free product of petroleum hydrocarbons. The nature and vertical and lateral extent of groundwater contamination is yet to be fully characterized, and EOC is yet to start remediating the impacted groundwater.

The Regional Water Board records also indicate that between 1988 and 2007 numerous site assessment activities were conducted, including groundwater monitoring and sampling at varying intervals, and installation of 11 groundwater monitoring wells, 13 exploratory borings, 23 hydropunch borings, and a soil vapor extraction system (SVE). EOC's consultant at that time recommended in a report dated January 30, 2006, entitled "Remediation Status and 3rd and 4th Quarters 2005 Groundwater Monitoring Report," that the SVE system be decommissioned due to its opinion that the system had recovered all that was reasonably expected possible. Accordingly, later that year (2006), the SVE system was dismantled and removed from the site. Three groundwater MWs were also destroyed during this time period after they went dry due to a lowering of the groundwater table.

A site assessment report, dated May 11, 2011, was submitted to the Regional Water Board. This report indicates the presence of Liquid Petroleum Hydrocarbons product (LPH or free product) in newly installed groundwater monitoring wells with significant thicknesses up to 2.08 feet.

Recent site assessment activities reported in May and June 2011 by the Discharger include the installation of three groundwater MWs in 2009, and one groundwater MW in 2011. Following the installation of these wells, intermittent LPH removal and groundwater monitoring activities of all accessible site wells have been conducted.

Accordingly, pursuant to California Water Code Sections 13267 and 13304, tentative CAO R7-2012-0043 is proposed to be issued by the Regional Water Board to order the Discharger to prepare technical reports and clean-up or abate the petroleum hydrocarbon impacted soil and groundwater at the site.

A public hearing on this matter will be held as follows:

Date: June 21, 2012
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Town of Yucca Valley
Community Center – Yucca Room
57090 Twentynine Palms Highway
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

During the hearing, the public and any other person interested in this matter can provide the Regional Water Board with comments on the tentative Order.

Persons wishing to file written comments, or objections to, the tentative CAO are requested to do so by June 19, 2012 so that the Regional Water Board may consider the comments.

Comments must be mailed to the following address:

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

A copy of the tentative CAO may be obtained from the Regional Water Board Internet website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_decisions/

Please contact the Regional Water Board's Assistant Executive Officer, Jose Angel, at (760) 776-8932 for any questions regarding this matter. Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you think would be interested in this matter.

For any person who is disabled and requires special accommodations to participate in this Regional Water Board hearing, please contact Hilda Vasquez at (760) 776-8950 no later than 10 days before the scheduled hearing date.