



Enforcement News

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Lahontan Water Board Closes Pollution Case at Former Susanville Gas Station Site

For Immediate Release

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After more than a decade of enforcement actions at the site of a former gas station, the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) this week issued a case closure letter to the owners of the once heavily polluted property in Susanville, Lassen County.

The former Tosco (Unocal) gas station at 1500 Main Street in Susanville was the site of past leaks of petroleum products. Gasoline and heating oil from underground storage tanks and pipelines were found floating on the water table in 1996. At that time Water Board staff worked with Lassen County to oversee investigation and cleanup actions by the Tosco Corporation.

Nevertheless, by 2002 the groundwater contamination reached to Cornell Street, about 650 feet away, and threatened the Susan River. The Water Board issued a cleanup and abatement order to the Tosco Corporation that same year requiring aggressive actions to cleanup soil and groundwater contamination.

Two subsequent excavations at the former gas station removed approximately 730 cubic yards of contaminated soil down to 18 feet below ground surface. A soil vapor extraction system removed an additional 11,678 pounds of hydrocarbons.

Once the petroleum that was floating on the water table was completely removed in 2003, and additional cleanup actions were conducted, groundwater monitoring showed hydrocarbons concentrations decreasing with time. Groundwater pumping over ten years removed 740,570 gallons of contaminated water, which was treated with carbon before disposal to the sanitary sewer.

At no time were municipal water supply wells threatened by contamination from the former gas station. And while the Susan River is less than 1,000 feet away from the site, recent monitoring shows the river is not threatened by the low levels of hydrocarbons in the soil and groundwater at the site, which will decrease over time.

The Water Board's evaluation of data collected from this property has determined that historical releases of petroleum products no longer pose a threat to human health or the beneficial use of groundwater in the area, justifying the decision to close the case. The fate of the property, now a vacant lot, rests with the current owner, the Chevron Corporation.



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The Lahontan Water Board protects and restores water quality in California east of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada crests from the Oregon border through the Mojave Desert. More information about the Water Board's Underground Storage Tank Program and other water issues can be found on the Water Board's website at www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan.