



Enforcement News

\$2.4M Judgment Entered Against L.A. World Airports for Underground Storage Tank Violations

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SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has reached a \$2.4 million settlement with Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) for allegedly violating leak prevention requirements for hazardous substances in underground storage tanks located at the Los Angeles International Airport, L.A./Ontario International Airport and the Van Nuys Airport.

The State Water Board began an investigation in 2011 under the Government Owned and/or Operated Tanks (GOT) Initiative after alleged violations were identified during inspections conducted at nine underground storage tank facilities owned and operated by LAWA. The alleged violations included failure to monitor tanks and product piping; late testing of monitoring equipment; and failure to install secondary containment. In addition, the State Water Board discovered three unpermitted and unmonitored underground storage tank systems located at the Los Angeles International Airport “burn site,” a facility used to simulate airplane crashes and fires by combusting dispersed aviation fuel under a steel mock-up of an airplane fuselage.

“What made this case so concerning is that, during our investigation, State Water Board investigators unexpectedly found three large unpermitted and unmonitored tanks that were used to store the hazardous runoff produced from the fire training exercises,” said David Boyers, State Water Board assistant chief counsel. “Both LAWA and the local agency responsible for permitting the tanks, in this case the Los Angeles City Fire Department, should have known the tanks were storing hazardous substances that posed a risk to the environment and should have been permitted. We required that LAWA test the soil beneath the tanks in order to ensure that no releases had occurred. Thankfully, there was no contamination that resulted from the violations.”

Under the terms of the settlement, LAWA will pay \$1.2 million in civil penalties to the State Water Board, \$100,000 for reimbursement of enforcement costs, and \$1.1 million will be suspended with \$650,000 being suspended based on LAWA completing several environmental



improvements that enhance compliance at its facilities. The remaining \$450,000 is suspended as long as LAWA maintains compliance with the underground storage tank requirements specified in the judgment for a period of five years.

This lawsuit is the third enforcement action by the State Water Board's Office of Enforcement under the State Water Board's GOT Initiative that began in 2010 with the assistance of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The purpose of the GOT Initiative is to alleviate the compliance and enforcement disparity between privately and publicly owned and operated underground storage tank facilities.

A copy of the judgment, filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court, can be found on the State Water Board's Office of Enforcement [website](#).

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