Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

Status of Actions July 2025
PG&E Hinkley Chromium Contamination

Chromium Plume Boundary

In general, the First Quarter 2025 groundwater data indicates that plume migration is not occurring but does reflect natural fluctuations of groundwater concentrations as remediation progresses. The First Quarter 2025 chromium plume maps can be viewed on GeoTracker at First Quarter 2025 Groundwater Monitoring Report and Domestic Well Sampling Results (https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=iv163) and are Figures 5-1 through 5-6 of this report.

Chromium plume maps representing previous quarters are posted on the Water Board's Hinkley website at Water Board's Hinkley website (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/projects/pge/index.shtml), at the bottom of the page under the section titled "Other Documents and Information." The Second Quarter 2025 plume map is due on August 10, 2025, consistent with the reporting due dates contained in Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) No. R6V-2015-0068-A1.

Domestic Well 35-41 and Monitoring Well MW-67A Hexavalent Chromium Concentrations

During routine monitoring, monitoring well MW-67A had an increase in hexavalent chromium concentrations during the Second Quarter 2024. PG&E began providing bottled water to the residence with domestic well 35-41 in accordance with the Environmental Impact Report mitigation measure WTR-MM-2A and began monthly monitoring of domestic well 35-41 and MW-67A. In October 2024, PG&E provided a work plan to install monitoring wells to characterize hexavalent chromium in the vadose zone and in groundwater near domestic well 35-41 and monitoring well MW-67A and determine a cause of the increases in chromium.

The highest hexavalent chromium concentration in the area was measured at domestic well 35-41 in July 2024 at 21 parts per billion and the most recent hexavalent chromium concentration was measured at 7.8 parts per billion in December 2024. The most recent concentration at MW-67A was measured at 6.1 parts per billion. PG&E will continue to monitor the concentrations in the area around domestic well 35-41.

Water Board staff do not consider the elevated concentration of hexavalent chromium at MW-67A and domestic well 35-41 to be a loss of hydraulic control or expansion of the chromium plume because data at monitoring wells between the 3.1 parts per billion plume boundary and MW-67A and 35-41 continue to have low to non-detect concentrations in the monitoring wells.

PG&E Request to Discontinue Bioreactor Post-Pilot Test Monitoring and Reporting

Between January 2015 and September 2016, PG&E conducted a bioreactor pilot test to assess the effectiveness of a bioreactor in treating hexavalent chromium in groundwater. The bioreactor used phosphoric acid as a food source for the microbes which resulted in orthophosphate in reinjection water. Following the pilot test, orthophosphate monitoring was performed in a network of thirty wells that were used for reinjection during the bioreactor pilot test. In 2017, PG&E requested to cease sampling associated with the bioreactor pilot test, although five wells still exhibited elevated orthophosphate concentrations. Water Board staff responded with a letter requiring ongoing orthophosphate monitoring until the appropriate orthophosphate travel time in groundwater had passed and concentrations reached 0.1 parts per million (ppm) or less for two consecutive sampling events.

On May 7, 2025, Water Board staff received PG&E's request to discontinue bioreactor post-pilot test monitoring. Monitoring of CA-MW-101 is the only remaining activity for the bioreactor pilot test that was performed under a notice of applicability to the Board Order No. R6V-2008-0014, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Pacific Gas and Electric Company General Site-wide Groundwater Remediation Project. Water Board staff are reviewing this request.

PG&E Request to Extend Hydraulic Capture Metric Report Due Dates by 15 Days

Hydraulic capture metrics were outlined in CAO R6V-2015-0068, which requires PG&E to prevent the chromium plume from migrating or expanding beyond the hexavalent and total chromium boundaries within the designated hydraulic capture areas. Hydraulic capture is assessed by comparing hydraulic gradients or flow direction vectors calculated from specific monitoring well pairs and triplets within the most recent capture zone approved by the Water Board.

The CAO requires Hydraulic Capture Metric Reports demonstrating monthly maintained hydraulic capture that is due 15 days after the end of the quarter. On June 5, 2025, Water Board staff received a request from PG&E for Water Board approval of an extension of the due dates for the Hydraulic Capture Metric Report by 15 days. The extended due date will make the report due 30 days after the end of the quarter. Water Board staff are reviewing this request.

PG&E Modified Domestic Well Sampling Area

Discussed in the First Quarter 2025 monitoring report, PG&E plans to modify the domestic well sampling area that was established using the 2014 hexavalent chromium plume boundary. The modified boundary for the domestic well sampling area is based on the third quarter 2023 plume boundary. PG&E plans to discontinue sampling domestic wells outside of the 1-mile required area based on WTR-MM-2a. PG&E will continue to sample monitoring wells in the area around the domestic wells.

Feasibility Study to Evaluate Hexavalent Chromium Background Values

As discussed at the January 2025 board meeting, the Water Board will be requiring a feasibility study to be performed by PG&E to inform us on cleanup time frames, developing cleanup goals or milestones, applying information learned from the USGS Background Study, and updating the model to correspond with current site conditions. Other information may include cost analysis, consideration of any new technology available, modification to the remedy to accelerate cleanup, and running the model with new data not included in the previous feasibility study.

Routine Monitoring Reports

PG&E submitted the following reports in accordance with the respective monitoring and reporting requirements. Water Board staff are reviewing these routine monitoring reports.

- 1st Quarter 2025 Hydraulic Capture Monitoring Report
- 1st Quarter 2025 Agricultural Treatment Units Monitoring Report
- 1st Quarter 2025 Groundwater Monitoring Report and Domestic Well Sampling Results

Water Board PG&E Hinkley Chromium Cleanup Webpage

Water Board staff have updated our PG&E Hinkley Chromium Cleanup Project webpage (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/projects/pge/). The project webpage hosts certain documents and announcements related to PG&E's corrective actions, as well as copies of past and current plume maps to access or download and print from the webpage. Please contact Water Board staff with any questions or for assistance.

Your Water Board Staff Contacts

Water Board oversight of the PG&E Hinkley Chromium Cleanup project is provided by staff in the Water Board's Victorville office located at 15095 Amargosa Road, Building 2, Suite 210, Victorville, CA 92394. Your Water Board staff contacts are listed below. Please feel free to contact any of the listed should you need assistance.

Amanda Lopez, Engineering Geologist
(760) 241-7373 (amanda.lopez@waterboards.ca.gov)

Christina Guerra, Senior Engineering Geologist
(760) 241-7333 (christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov)

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
(760) 241-6583, general number
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/