



Enforcement News

State Water Board Files Complaint Against Ami Adini & Associates Alleging Fraud Against Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund

Complaint Also Alleges Professional Negligence When Conducting Environmental Cleanup

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SACRAMENTO – The California Office of the Attorney General, on behalf of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), filed a complaint against Ami Adini & Associates, Inc. and its principals, Ami Adini and Elie Balas. The complaint alleges Ami Adini & Associates submitted false information to the State Water Board’s Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund (Fund) in order to receive reimbursements. The complaint also alleges Ami Adini & Associates was negligent in conducting environmental cleanups at gasoline station sites.

Ami Adini & Associates, located in Los Angeles, provides investigation and cleanup services at petroleum contaminated gas stations. The company has worked at more than 70 sites since the Fund’s inception, and is currently overseeing work at more than 15 sites in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Humboldt, Sonoma, San Mateo and San Joaquin counties.

The complaint alleges that Ami Adini & Associates submitted false information to receive payment from the Fund for work not performed and supplies not used. It’s also alleged that Ami Adini & Associates was professionally negligent in its operation of systems that treat soil and groundwater. In addition to the Office of the Attorney General’s complaint, a whistleblower suit alleging fraud has been filed against Ami Adini & Associates.

“The State Water Board is committed to combatting fraud, waste and abuse against the Fund. This case involves not only Ami Adini & Associates submitting false information, but also its professional negligence in the operation of treatment systems resulting in waste and abuse of funds that are intended to be used for cleanups,” said Cris Carrigan, director of the State Water Board’s Office of Enforcement. “Our ability to take enforcement actions to deter fraud, waste and abuse are greatly enhanced under the recently-enacted Senate Bill 445.”

In 2014 Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 445, which places new safeguards to fight fraud against the Fund. The law gives the State Water Board the authority to bar claimants and consultants from participating in the Fund and impose penalties of up to \$500,000 per violation. The law also allows the recovery of costs for investigation and prosecution, and it grants administrative authority to prosecute cases.





Information on SB 445 can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/sb445.pdf

The civil complaint is available on the [Office of Enforcement webpage](#).

A direct link to the complaint can be found here:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/aaa_complaint.pdf

A fact sheet on the State Water Board's efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute fraud against the Fund is on the State Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/publications_forms/publications/factsheets/docs/fraud_efforts_factsheet.pdf

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