



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW FOUNDATION

*1736 Franklin Street, 9th Floor, Oakland, California 94612 • 510/208-4555 • Fax 510/208-4562
www. enviolaw.org • envlaw@enviolaw.org*

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For more information, contact: Jim Wheaton (510) 208-4555 or Chris Ridout (213) 626-0571.

Environmental Group Sues Southern California Gas for Releasing Chemicals into Drinking Water Aquifers

LOS ANGELES, January 11th – An environmental group sued Southern California Gas Company today, alleging the company is polluting aquifers beneath Playa Del Rey and Marina Del Rey. The group claims SoCalGas is releasing cancer-causing “BTEX” chemicals into aquifers designated as future drinking water sources from its underground gas storage reservoir. The suit may signal problems to come for the gas company, whose gas storage operations are also believed by some to be the source of gases migrating to the surface beneath the troubled Playa Vista development.

The Environmental Law Foundation filed the action in Los Angeles Superior Court alleging repeated violations of California’s Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, known as Proposition 65. That initiative strictly prohibits the discharge or release of any chemicals known to cause cancer or birth defects into any actual or potential sources of drinking water.

“It’s our goal to enforce California law and stop the gas company from releasing toxics into these aquifers,” said Jim Wheaton, President of Environmental Law Foundation. “This storage facility is leaking like a sieve, threatening groundwater with oilfield chemicals and potentially endangering people who live in this area.”

The lawsuit is seeking an injunction against the company for discharging cancer-causing oilfield gases, known as “BTEX” (for benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and

xylene) into protected aquifers. Small amounts of these chemicals can render aquifers unusable as drinking water. Plaintiffs allege that the gas company has been unable to contain their gas and maintain the reservoir. As a result, they say it leaks millions of cubic feet of gas annually. The gas migrates upward through wells drilled in the 1930s and before, leaks out of those wells and then passes through and pollutes the aquifers.

For media materials and to view the complaint, visit www.envirolaw.org or contact Alise Cappel at (510) 208-4555.

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