



Enforcement News

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
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PG&E Issued Comprehensive Cleanup and Abatement Order for Chromium Remediation Efforts In Hinkley

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SOUTH LAKE TAHOE – After nearly a year of review and public comment the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan Water Board) has issued a comprehensive Cleanup and Abatement Order (Order) against Pacific Gas and Electric Company, ordering the state’s largest utility to continue its cleanup of chromium-contaminated groundwater in Hinkley, Calif.

The Lahontan Water Board adopted the Order directing PG&E to aggressively remediate chromium-contaminated groundwater within set deadlines; protect nearby drinking water wells; provide monitoring reports consistent with state and federal standards; and comply with plume capture requirements and targets to clean up the contamination. This streamlined Order consolidates the requirements from 18 previous orders into a single Order.

Since 1987, the Lahontan Water Board has been requiring PG&E to locate and remediate chromium contamination in groundwater beneath its Compressor Station in Hinkley, located eight miles west of Barstow in San Bernardino County. The compressor station has been in operation since 1952, and up until 1965 a hexavalent chromium-based corrosion inhibitor was used in the water that was pumped into the plant’s cooling towers. The chromium-contaminated water was then discharged into unlined evaporation ponds.

In 1987 PG&E reported to the state that it found high chromium concentrations beneath the compressor station and contamination spread north into the Hinkley Valley. Cleanup began in 1988 and has since been expanded into a comprehensive system of extraction, treatment, and fresh-water injection that has been effectively shrinking the plume over the past several years. Currently, no private drinking water wells are above the drinking water standard.

“This Order sets a clear path toward final remediation. It is anticipated that in 17 years nearly 80 percent of the contaminated water will be cleaned up to drinking water standards,” said Kimberly Cox, chair of the Lahontan Water Board. “Public participation and outreach was a cornerstone in developing this Order. The public workshops allowed all participants to work together, share ideas and find common ground.”

For more information on the Cleanup and Abatement Order, see the Lahontan Water Board’s webpage on the [PG&E cleanup of Hinkley](#).

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is a California state agency responsible for the preservation and enhancement of the quality of California’s water resources in eastern California. For more information about the Lahontan Water Board visit its [website](#).

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