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SPECIAL NEWS

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SANTA FE PACIFIC PIPELINE BREAK IN SIERRA NEVADA

SUMMIT CREEK—More than 30 individuals have responded to a possible break in the Santa Fe Pacific Pipeline that ships petroleum product from San Francisco to Reno. Officials received a report of petroleum odor in an area near Summit Creek on March 1, 1997 in the evening. Representatives from the California Department of Fish and Game, the Nevada County Environmental Health Office and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection investigated and found a pool of water approximately six to 12 feet in size with an oily sheen. Absorbent pads and boom were set in the area.

The investigation closed around 6 p.m. on March 1, due to weather and darkness. It resumed on Sunday. The pipeline was shutdown and inspector dispatched. Efforts to identify the exact type of petroleum product are underway.

Several sets of boom have been placed across Summit Creek to capture product that may travel down from the site of the sheen. Crews are creating a dam upstream from Donner Lake, approximately an eighth of a mile, to prevent product from reaching the lake. A sampling and monitoring program for the water will be implemented.

Access to the area is difficult due to snow as deep as 12 feet, high winds, and steep terrain. Safety is a high concern for hypothermia and frost bite. A monitoring program has been set in place to determine the health hazard to workers.

A temporary incident command post has been established at the Donner Summit Fire Station but is expected to move within the day. Until the command post is fully functional, press are asked to call the Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response, Emergency Operations Center at (916) 323-0716, ext. 3009.

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