

OSPR News Release

DATE: Friday, June 27, 1997

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

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For Immediate Release

Peyton Hill Tosco Oil Spill in Martinez

The State Department of Fish and Game's Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) is responding to a June 9 gasoline spill from a Tosco pipeline in the Martinez area. The pipeline was shut down, and the petroleum flow stopped. The spill is in an area known as Peyton Hill, on Wickland Oil Terminal and Union Pacific Railroad property. It has contaminated soil on approximately 2.3 acres, in a dry seasonal wetland adjacent to Peyton Slough. The spill is about three-quarters of a mile from Carquinez Strait. It does not present any public health hazards, and is not expected to affect the busy waterway.

A Unified Command was quickly established by the OSPR, including participation by the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFM), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and Tosco Refinery. The agencies and responsible party (Tosco) are coordinating the clean-up and removal of the spilled gasoline. The San Francisco Bay Area Air Quality Management District (AQMD) is also a participant, and representatives from both the City of Martinez and Contra Costa County District Attorney's office have visited the site.

The contaminated area is a dry seasonal wetland, which attracts waterfowl and fish during the winter flood seasons. There are a few carp and perch in a nearby pond, which normally die when the water evaporates, this time of year. A few threatened and endangered plant species are thought to be present in the dry marsh, and are being identified.

(more, over)

***OSPR News Release: Tosco/Peyton Hill Oil Spill
June 26, 1997***

On June 10, work crews found a hole in one of the Tosco pipelines, and secured it with a clamp. That section of pipe has since been removed, and a replacement section is being fabricated. Crews continued “day-lighting” (digging to expose) other sections of the buried pipeline for inspection, and constructed numerous recovery sumps to extract free-flowing liquids at locations in the affected area.

Tosco hired Rust Industrial Cleaning Service to remove free-flowing liquids from containment sumps, using vacuum trucks. As of today, Tosco estimates approximately 413 barrels of gasoline and water have been recovered. This number may change, as water is extracted from the recovered product.

Because there are numerous underground pipelines of varying ages in the immediate area, the State Fire Marshall has asked that all the pipes there be exposed and examined for corrosion and coating compromise, which may have resulted from this spill. The pipelines belong to Tosco and other companies.

OSPR’s Petroleum Chemistry Lab and others are conducting fingerprinting and other tests to determine whether there is more than one type of petroleum hydrocarbon present in the spill area. If multiple types of hydrocarbons are identified, it may indicate that more than one source of petroleum has contributed to contamination in the marsh. In addition, core sampling at the site is ongoing, to determine the extent of the gas plume. This work is being done by Montgomery Watson Environmental, under contract with Tosco.

Contaminated soil will be excavated, sampled, and analyzed for hazardous waste characteristics and hydrocarbon content. The State Fire Marshal will oversee testing of the new section of Tosco’s pipe, before the line is returned to service. Clean-up operations are expected to continue at least another 60 days, after which work to return the marsh to its natural state will begin, under supervision of the Department of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

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