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**State Water Board Investigates Impact to Water from exploding oil tank
Oil tank that exploded in Upper Ojai was unpermitted.**

Upper Ojai, CA – An unpermitted crude oil tank that exploded in Upper Ojai on Aug. 5, 2016 caused a discharge of crude oil and water, which may have impacted nearby surface and/or groundwater sources, including Sisar Creek. The operator, Silver Exploration Company (Silver X), failed to obtain the proper permits from the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) prior to installing the tank.

“The Regional Board is concerned that the water quality in the area may have been impacted or potentially impacted by the unauthorized release. The tank explosion has caused petroleum and Buckeye Platinum residue to be deposited where it may impact groundwater or Sisar Creek, a water of the State,” states the Investigative Order dated Jan. 9 issued by the Water Board. The Water Board is the “public agency with primary responsibility for the protection of ground and surface water quality within the major portions of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.”

“This investigative order and report show an oil and gas operator cutting corners and that's why the public needs our local agencies to be vigilant in protecting our water,” said Kimberly Rivers, Executive Director of CFROG. “What good are laws and clean up requirements if they are not fully enforced?”

The order, addressed to Scot Stettle with Silver X says the operator has failed to respond to requests for information and now is ordered to provide a technical report by Feb. 9. Attachments included with the report include notices of violations from the VCAPCD and the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR). Mr. Dent, listed as the operator, was on site with a VCAPCD inspector doing an annual inspection at the time of the explosion. He said there was about 42 barrels (about 1800 gallons) of crude oil in the tank at the time of the explosion.

“Soil staining extended from approximately five to 15 feet outward all around the tank,” states the report from the Aug. 8 site visit of the Water Board. It also states, “staff did not identify any Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as absorbent booms, sand bags, or settlement traps,” and Mr. Dent stated the company “is not enrolled in the Regional Board’s Industrial Stormwater Permit.” As to the cause of the fire it is still under investigation but at the Aug 8 site visit Mr.

Dent told Water Board staff, “he suspected that the cause of the fire could be due to static electricity, which may have created the spark necessary to ignite the petroleum contents.” When

Silver X Tank Unpermitted, potential water impacts

staff asked if an “electronic sensor or floating device was used in this tank... Mr. Dent stated that there is none.” He also told staff that the Ventura County District Attorney is conducting an investigation.

“The report reveals the exploding tank had no permit, Best Management Practices were not being used and the tank did not have a sensor that could have prevented the explosion,” said Rivers. “We hope our regulators wake up and see what many neighborhoods have known for decades, that some oil and gas operators don't follow the rules.”

Click here to visit http://www.cfrog.org/cfrog_pr for link to Water Board Investigative Report and Attachments



Aug. 5, 2016 – An un-permitted crude oil storage tank explodes in Upper Ojai and burns for about two hours. The California State Water Resources Control Board has found the discharge of oil and water from the explosion may have impacted Sisar Creek, a local creek that is a tributary to the Santa Clara River.