

# Oil leak at new power plant forces shutdown

By ERIN WALDNER, Californian staff writer  
Bakersfield Californian

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La Paloma, a new power plant in Kern County, was shut down Monday following an oil leak on site.

Oil began leaking from inside a turbine unit, said La Paloma spokeswoman Megan Frey. The oil touched the hot metal of the turbine, creating some smoke, which triggered the plant's automatic shut-down system, she said.

No one was injured during the incident, Frey said. Around 30 personnel work at the plant, located near the town of McKittrick, about 20 miles west of Bakersfield.

Kelly Malay, spokeswoman for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, said a hydraulic line burst and some hydraulic oil was sprayed onto the gas turbine. The incident occurred in a contained area, so district officials expect any possible emissions were eliminated, Malay said.

At the time of the incident, the plant was generating energy, Frey said. The project developer, PG&E National Energy Group, contacted the California Independent System Operator and the appropriate agencies, she said.

Frey did not know how long the plant would be shut down, she said. The plant can generate up to 1,121 megawatts of energy, enough power for more than 1 million homes.

ISO spokesman Greg Fishman said at this time of year, the plant's shutdown is probably not a big deal because demand for power is very low.

Firefighters from the Kern County Fire Department responded to the incident.

La Paloma is a natural gas-fired combined cycle generating plant. It consists of four combustion turbines and associated systems and facilities. The leak occurred in one of the turbine units.

Two of the units went on line in January and were generating 562 megawatts of energy, according to the California Energy Commission. The other two units followed suit in March.

# AIR VIOLATIONS

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The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has issued the following citations against businesses suspected of violating pollution rules. For more information, call the district at 326-6900.

Dinuba Energy Inc. in Reedley was cited Dec. 2 for CEM malfunctioning. Breakdown relief was not requested within eight hours.

Halliburton Drilling Systems in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 2 for failing to maintain records as required.

Chevron U.S.A. in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 2 for exceeding the emission rate of NOx in Lost Hills.

Hifdhuulah Alrowhany of Taft was cited Dec. 2 for having a portable office moved from Berry Petroleum at the Four Corners Lake Station in Taft before being thoroughly inspected and without proper notification.

Global Elastomeric Products Inc. in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 2 for exceeding VOC emissions.

Berry Petroleum Co. in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 2 for a portable office being moved from the Four Corners Lake Station in Taft without proper notification and without being thoroughly inspected.

Dionisio Perez in Delano was cited Dec. 3 for burning illegal material on a no-burn day.

ACE Farms in Delano was cited Dec. 3 for burning illegal material on a no-burn day.

Candy's Diesel Repair in Dinuba was cited Dec. 3 for failing to maintain records as required.

Bret's Auto Center in Dinuba was cited Dec. 3 for using closed, non-absorbent containers for solvent-laden cloth or paper disposal. The center was also cited for having spent coatings not stored in closed containers.

Mitch Brown Construction Inc. in Porterville was cited Dec. 3 for operating an asphalt mix plant with excess emissions of NOx.

Ernie's Transportation in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 3 for moving a portable office trailer without being thoroughly inspected and without proper notification.

Equilon Enterprises LLC in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 4 for exceeding H2S content.

ChevronTexaco Inc. in McKittrick was cited Dec. 4 for exceeding sulfur and/or sulfur dioxide emissions on four steam generations.

TIC - The Industrial Company in Bakersfield was cited Dec. 4 for NOx emissions exceeding the limit.

Liquid Waste Management Inc. in McKittrick was cited Dec. 4 for failing to analyze weekly samples for VOC content of liquids.

City of Delano was cited Dec. 5 for operating with suspended permits on Lytle Road.

M. Caratan Inc. in Delano was cited Dec. 5 for not monitoring stack concentrations of NOx, CO and O2 at least once every month with a portable analyzer.

#### Letter to the Editor, Bakersfield Californian

April 1, 2003

### **Dairy is their master**

Supervisor Ray Watson is screeching like a mashed cat about the three-mile zone for dairies, but not because he is concerned for his constituents but because he is concerned over his future fund-raising needs.

It is obvious that in Kern's agriculture and dairy industry is the 500- pound gorilla of fund raising. To Watson, it is elementary. He tows the dairy line.

But what else is new? Kern supervisors have fought for decades any attempt to clean up the environment and the air that we all breathe. As such, it matters not who is elected on the board, they all have the same masters.

Watson, however, does not have to worry about any legislation from Sen. Dean Florez as Florez has a death wish politically and with the help of agriculture's big cahunas, Watson cohorts on the board can be counted to give Florez some unneeded help.

The longer you live in Kern County, the longer some things stay the same when it comes to local politicians serving the public needs, it just ain't happening. If any

action by the Board of Supervisors does not please agriculture, oil or the law enforcement community or business, it is just a dream.

As far as the rest of Kern County residents, it's not love but it's not bad is the supervisors' attitude.

PANFILO FUENTES, Bakersfield

Letters to the Editor, Modesto Bee

## Blame Urbanization

The authors of the pollution reform package have completely overlooked the real problem of air pollution: industrialization. The farming population is far smaller than the urban population in California. There are far more cars and factories than irrigation pumps and tractors. Furthermore, with the ever-increasing urban sprawl, farmland and farm equipment will gradually decrease as time goes on.

Eliminating the ability to burn is going to require more farmland to disappear to make way for landfills, which is a hazard that environmentalists have fought for years. With the governor already making dramatic cuts in the state budget and the obvious need for spending in areas such as the energy crisis, how much of the budget is the state willing to submit to farm grants? Also, the loan program isn't fair to the farmers because they still absorb the entire cost. Buying farm equipment isn't like buying a new Honda; it's more like buying a few new Corvettes. The expense is incredible.

Ultimately, pollution arose with the birth of industrialization and the bulk of the valley's air problem still lies in the rising population of its urban areas.

**MIKE TUPPER**

Gustine

Letter to the Editor, Modesto Bee

## Pollutants in perspective

To help reduce air pollution in the valley, farmers are required to burn brush on certain days that the air is supposed to mix well. That's good. However, the amount of wood that is burned in the valley by farmers is small compared with the amount that is consumed by forest fires. Doesn't it seem like we should put more emphasis on regulating the forest fires instead of brush fires?

Farmers have done a reasonably good job of following the guidelines that have been set. Now there is talk that everyone who has a fireplace or an old insert will be told not to burn at all, or be restricted to certain days. This seems inconsistent. The amount of particles that fireplaces emit into the air is insignificant compared with the amount of particles a farmer's brush pile puts into the air, and a farmer's brush pile is even more insignificant than a forest fire.

I don't want any more restrictions on the farmers. They have enough and are our food suppliers (let's not bite the hands that feed us). Why is it then necessary to restrict fireplaces, when the amount of particles emitted is far, far less than the amount burned by ranches, and far, far, far less than forest fires?

ROBERT RUMBLE

Modesto