

[http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking news/ci_6630305](http://www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci_6630305)

City sues oil company over fuel spill cleanup at Qualcomm Stadium

The Associated Press

Article Launched: 08/15/2007 12:21:43 PM PDT

SAN DIEGO—The city of San Diego has filed suit against a Houston oil company to speed the clean-up of a mile-long fuel plume that seeped into the ground beneath Qualcomm Stadium 15 years ago.

The suit, filed Tuesday in San Diego Superior Court, seeks millions of dollars from Kinder Morgan Energy Partners L.P. to do the removal work and compensate the city for lost use of an aquifer the city would like to tap for drinking water.

Kinder Morgan owns a tank farm north of the stadium property where it stores 26 million gallons of gasoline, jet fuel and diesel fuel.

The petroleum products have leaked in a plume that fans out beneath Qualcomm Stadium and its parking lot to a point south of the San Diego River, according to the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

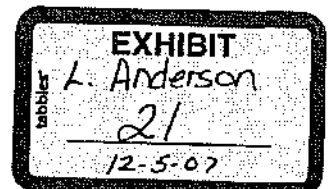
"We want a complete and total restoration of this property to its original natural form in and around Qualcomm Stadium," said City Attorney Michael Aguirre.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Emily Mir Thompson said the company is working closely with the water board and is on track to clean up the contaminated soil by 2010 and the tainted ground water by 2013.

"We disagree that our response has been slow or in any way deficient," Mir Thompson said. "We have continually offered to resolve this dispute with the city through mediation before a jointly selected neutral mediator, without the need for resorting to the delay and expense of litigation."

Kinder Morgan is the largest independent owner-operator of petroleum product pipelines in the United States, with more than 10,000 miles of pipes across the country. Gasoline at the Mission Valley facility is piped in from Long Beach.

← 6 years later



Anderson Exhibit # 21

http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/leaked-petrol-contaminates-suburb/2007/09/08/1188783562_165.html?page=fullpage#

Enough petrol to fill 800 Commodores - and some

September 9, 2007

The dream of finding oil in your backyard has become a real-life nightmare for anxious Newport residents, writes William Birnbauer.

THREE tiny pin holes in a seven-kilometre steel pipeline. That's all it took to create a 16-hectare plume of petrol that stretches for 850 metres under the streets of Newport, where some residents now fear for their health and environmental experts say the ground water may be tainted for decades.

Three pin pricks with a total diameter of just two to three millimetres. Yet, undetected for up to two years, unleaded petrol spurting from these tiny holes was able to contaminate a massive area. The leak was discovered when residents smelt petrol in stormwater drains and workers tasted it in drinking water.

As Mobil pumped hundreds of thousands of litres of fuel from the Altona refinery to its terminal in Yarraville, a seeping tide of petrol, up to one metre thick, spread unnoticed eight metres below ground — under factories, car parks, roads and homes. And it is still spreading.

A clean-up which began last December has so far removed 56,500 litres of petroleum hydrocarbon and about 330,000 litres of contaminated ground water from around the leak on the corner of Champion Road and Market Street, Newport.

Experts are desperately trying to prevent the petrol from spreading south and south-east into Williamstown cemetery, a baseball field and nearby residential areas.

Between 60 and 70 wells have been sunk to test ground water — though residents are angry that the soil in



their backyards has not been analysed. Investigators say they have found no immediate health risks to residents or workers, but environmental experts LanePiper — in a report to the Environment Protection Authority — have called for an assessment of the risk of an explosion should the petrol enter sewers.

Local Upper House member and longtime anti-pollution campaigner Colleen Hartland was concerned that samples had not been taken from residents' homes. "A major company was allowed to pollute for what sounds like a substantial amount of time with very little oversight," she said.

Mobil is using skimmer pumps in a bid to stabilise the plume and retard its spread. Further preventive measures also are being examined, but the audit report by LanePiper warns none is guaranteed to work "due to the unpredictable nature of subsurface conditions".

An auditor's report on the leak was required under a clean-up notice issued to Mobil by the EPA. The report, paid for by Mobil, was handed to the EPA on August 31 and released publicly last week. The EPA's west metropolitan region manager, Scott Maloney, said the audit identified the extent of the plume and confirmed that the contamination did not currently pose any unacceptable risks to human health.

A health assessment provided to the auditor found that due mainly to vapours and odours, workers in subsurface construction or maintenance of underground infrastructure could be affected "via dermal contact and accidental ingestion of contaminated ground water and/or soil".

Cemetery workers could be exposed more frequently and over longer periods than most.

But residents say the testing has not been extensive enough. The LanePiper report says investigations have not been made into the risks of growing vegetables, flowers or having poultry.

The Sunday Age reported in February that at least 13 Challis Street residents were sick during mid-December.

One reported having a numb tongue and lips and headaches.

An apprentice electrician Matthew Kennedy said that after drinking two to three litres a day of petrol-tainted water over several months late last year, he developed migraines and lethargy, had a burning sensation in his chest and stomach, and vomited blood.

Problems with the pipeline, which runs mainly above ground and was installed in 1954, arose on December 6 last year when residents reported petrol odours in stormwater drains near the corner of Challis and Market streets. Four days after the odours were detected, Mobil No. 1 pipeline was isolated.

Two days later, it was confirmed to be the culprit. A small breach in the pipe was repaired on December 13 and it was back in use a week later. The damage, however, had been done.

Several days later, workers at Ballard Electrical at 199 Champion Road reported a strong smell of petrol in drinking water. This was thought to have been caused by hydrocarbon products penetrating plastic water pipes.

The EPA issued Mobil a formal clean-up notice on February 9, requiring remediation of the soil and ground water spoilage. Mobil also was required to provide a health assessment and an environmental audit report and submit a remedial action plan by the end of this month.

Extensive vapour monitoring, soil surveying, air sampling and recovery of hydrocarbon liquid and vapor have taken place. Tests found "highly elevated concentrations" of petroleum hydrocarbon vapours outside 199 Champion Road and under a car park at the site. Indoor air concentrations met guidelines.

Mobil spokesman Alan Bailey said the remediation was a "very costly exercise". The EPA was assessing the position in terms of legal responsibility, he said.

Mr Bailey played down the size of the plume, saying: "If you look at the impact of putting petrol on a water surface, a very small amount of petrol goes a long way.

It spreads out and forms a very thin film. It doesn't take long to cover a very wide area with a small amount of petroleum."