

Shell To Pay \$10.75 Million in Environmental Health Suit

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SAN DIEGO -- Shell Oil Co. will pay \$10.75 million to settle an environmental health suit alleging violations involving underground sensors at 62 gas stations in San Diego County, reported 10News.com.

"This is the largest environmental health settlement ever recorded in San Diego County," District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis told 10News.com. "Our local environment just got better because of this agreement."

The settlement stems from a lawsuit filed last Thursday in San Diego Superior Court, alleging that Shell, Shell Oil Products Co. LLC, Equilon Enterprises LLC and TMR Co., formerly Texaco Marketing and Refining Inc., failed to properly maintain and operate underground storage tanks and related leak detection equipment, according to the report.

The companies were accused of failing to test and monitor stored substances and failing to repair or upgrade facilities and equipment as required by law.

The county Department of Environmental Health began issuing notices of violation in 1999, addressing alleged violations of underground storage tank requirements, hazardous waste laws and state unfair business practices, Dumanis told 10News.com.

About 2,200 violations were noted on county inspection reports during a five-year period through mid-2004, the county's top prosecutor said in the report.

"Fortunately, the violations didn't include gas leaking into the underground water," Dumanis said.

"We are going to hold those accountable who would wish to pollute our environment, and we are going to hit them where it hurts the most -- in the pocket," she said.

Under the settlement, the 62 Shell gas stations countywide must install new tamper-resistant underground sensors, increase maintenance and create new management systems and conduct employee training to help prevent future problems, 10News.com reported.

Reference: <http://www.allbusiness.com/retail-trade/food-stores/4487416-1.html>