



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

801 K STREET • MS 24-07 • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

PHONE 916 / 323-1886 • FAX 916 / 323-1887 • TDD 916 / 324-2555 • WEB SITE conservation.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NR# 2013-17

December 11, 2013

Contact: Ed Wilson

Don Drysdale

Krista Watson

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION ISSUES PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTERIM REGULATIONS FOR OIL & GAS WELL STIMULATION

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Conservation (DOC) today gave notice of an interim rulemaking package to regulate oil and gas well stimulation. These “emergency” regulations, mandated by Senate Bill 4, will go to the Office of Administrative Law on December 19 to ensure they are in place by January 1.

“The proposed regulations that will go into effect at the start of 2015 are currently in the public comment process,” DOC Director Mark Nechodom said. “We expect significant public interest and significant changes to those regulations. The legislation also requires that interim regulations be in place until the final rules are ready. The interim regulations we are issuing today provide a fundamental baseline level of protection while we develop the more comprehensive regulations for 2015. Significantly, though, these emergency regulations place the key components of SB 4 regarding water quality monitoring and testing and regarding public transparency into effect as of January 1, 2014.”

Nechodom noted that existing, robust well construction standards will remain the backbone of DOC’s efforts to protect the environment, groundwater, and public safety.

The text of the interim regulations can be found at www.conservation.ca.gov. Oil and gas operators must self-certify that they have met the testing and public notification requirements of SB 4 before conducting well stimulation activities. That documentation is subject to review by the DOC’s Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources. Once permanent regulations are in place operators will have to obtain a permit from the division before well stimulation occurs, among other requirements.

The Office of Administrative Law (OAL) has 10 working days to review the interim regulations. OAL will do a separate public notice of the emergency rulemaking and that office will field public comments on the proposed regulations. OAL will consult with DOC before providing any response to comments. If OAL approves the rulemaking package, the interim rules will be in place at the end of the 10-day review.

Information about the emergency rulemaking process can be found at http://oal.ca.gov/Emergency_Regulation_Process.htm.

Information about DOC's related activities – including public hearings about proposed permanent regulations, the text of those regulations, and separate scoping meetings for a statewide Environmental Impact Report on the use of well stimulation – also can be found at www.conservation.ca.gov.

###