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FINAL VOLUMES OF INDEPENDENT SCIENCE STUDY ON OIL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES RELEASED

Volumes II, III Examine Oil and Gas Technologies' Effects on the Environment, Seismology

SACRAMENTO – The California Natural Resources Agency today announced that the California Council on Science & Technology (CCST) and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) have published the final two volumes of a comprehensive, independent scientific assessment of well stimulation, including hydraulic fracturing, as required by Senate Bill 4 (Pavley), signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in September 2013.

“We appreciate the hard work of the scientists at the California Council on Science and Technology and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory who conducted this important technical assessment,” said David Bunn, PhD, the Department of Conservation’s (DOC) newly appointed Director. DOC’s Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources regulates oil, gas and geothermal operations and on July 1, 2015 issued stringent environmental regulations for the use of oil and gas well stimulation, also required by SB 4.

“This independent, scientific assessment will now help guide our agency in crafting and enforcing regulations that protect public health and California’s natural environment,” Bunn added.

The independent scientific assessment was required by SB 4 and is organized in three major areas documented in three volumes. Volumes II and III were released today. Volume II assesses the potential impacts of well stimulation with respect to water, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as induced seismicity, ecology, traffic and noise. Volume III presents case studies to assess environmental issues and qualitative hazards for specific geographic regions, based on findings in Volume I and Volume II.

Volume I, released on January 14, 2015, described what well stimulation treatments are, how they are conducted in general and practiced in California, and where they have been and are being used for oil and gas production in the state. About 95 percent of reported hydraulic fractures in California were in the San Joaquin Valley, nearly all in four oil fields in Kern County.

The selection of CCST and LBNL to conduct the study was based on the expertise they and their partners have developed on well stimulation treatment issues. CCST and LBNL conducted an independent scientific and technical assessment of well completion techniques, primarily focused on hydraulic fracturing, on lands administered by the federal Bureau of Land Management in California. That study was published in August 2014. CCST was also selected for its tried-and-proven study process that provided the level of independence required under SB 4.

Copies of the independent, scientific assessment — including executive summaries — are available through the California Council on Science & Technology: http://www.ccst.us/projects/hydraulic_fracturing_public/SB4.php.

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