



# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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### CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION FINES 30 OPERATORS OVER FAILURE TO REPORT WATER USE

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Conservation (DOC) today issued civil penalties of \$4,500 each to 30 oil and gas operators that failed to report water usage data required under a 2014 law.

“Most of the state’s oil and gas operators made an attempt to get us the required information,” said State Oil & Gas Supervisor Steve Bohlen, head of DOC’s Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources. “We have fined those operators who made no effort to comply with the law. We have made it clear that, given severe drought conditions in the state, knowledge of how water is used and treated is vital. Additional fines for other reporting-related infractions likely will come soon.”

A law enacted by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in September 2014, SB 1281 by Senator Fran Pavley, requires operators to submit -- on a quarterly and well-by-well basis -- about 250 pieces of data related to the water used in producing oil, including the source, treatment and ultimate disposition of the water. The first set of data was released in mid-August. Operators who fail to meet subsequent reporting deadlines after being fined may be subject to larger civil penalties.

“Ultimately, we’re much more interested in collecting the operators’ data than their money,” Bohlen said.

All 433 operators in California were required to report under the new law, and 329 attempted to comply. The initial data release, however, included reports from only 242 operators. About a quarter of the operators filed data that was either incomplete or in an incompatible format. The Division has been working with those operators to correct and evaluate their reports.

Among other things, the data will help determine whether additional water brought to the surface during oil and gas production might be usable for oilfield activities or for other purposes such as irrigation. Most water associated with oil production cannot be put to beneficial use because of naturally-occurring salts, hydrocarbon or mineral content. The vast majority of that water is re-injected either to produce additional oil or for storage.

More information about SB 1281, including the first-quarter data, can be found [here](#).

California in 2014 produced more than 205 million barrels of oil with 3.3 billion barrels of water.

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