



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agencies Investigating Release of Hydrogen Sulfide in Goleta Area Potential Sources Being Evaluated

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — Today, the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, Santa Barbara County Fire Department, and Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management are investigating a release of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), which began causing a “rotten egg” smell in the Ellwood area of Goleta on Sunday, October 9.

Inspectors from the agencies are currently evaluating two potential sources, listed in order of likelihood, in the Ellwood area: 1) an agricultural water well, and 2) the Venoco oil and gas facility. Until the investigation is complete, the source of the odor cannot be defined. More information will be released once the source has been identified.

The agencies are collaborating to ensure that air quality conditions are monitored for the affected neighborhoods. As was the case yesterday and today, odors are stronger in the morning hours.

H₂S is a gas that produces a sulfurous odor at a low level and health effects at higher levels. H₂S levels were recorded by fence-line monitoring installed around the Venoco Ellwood facility; that monitoring detects H₂S in the area regardless of the source. On the morning of October 9, the fence-line monitoring recorded levels between 0.3 and 3.6 parts per million (ppm). Those levels range from generating a noticeable odor to generating some temporary health effects — such as nausea, headaches, minor respiratory symptoms, and watery eyes — following extended exposure.

Information regarding symptoms of H₂S exposure at various concentrations can be found at the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) website:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hydrogensulfide/hazards.html>. Information regarding recorded H₂S levels and wind conditions will be available on the Air Pollution Control District website: www.ourair.org.

If you or your family members are experiencing health effects from inhaling H₂S, it is recommended that you seal up your house and remain inside as much as possible. If the odors

continue to cause health effects, you should leave the area until conditions improve. Sensitive individuals with more serious or persistent health effects should seek medical attention.

To file a complaint with the Air Pollution Control District, call (805) 961-8810. To find more information on the complaint process, visit www.ourair.org/complaints.

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