



Air Resources Board Enforcement Division

Inspection Report

Morningstar Community Interviews 20220601

Lead Inspector Signature (Regina McDoniels)	Date
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Inspection Dates: June 1-2, 2022

Purpose of Inspection

On May 17, 2022, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) responded to a complaint in the Morningstar community, in Bakersfield, that the oil wells in Kern Bluff field, near residents, were leaking methane at high levels. On May 19, 2022, California Air Resources Board (CARB) enforcement staff received two emails from community groups, informing CARB of a well leak complaint made to SJVAPCD. In response to these emails, CARB staff inspected the wells and conducted community interviews in the Morningstar neighborhood.

CARB Staff Present

- Regina McDoniels, Air Pollution Specialist
- Juan Osornio, Manager

CCEJN Staff Present

- Cesar Aguirre, Community Activist

Community Information

Community: Morningstar Avenue
City/State/Zip: Bakersfield, CA 93306
County: Kern

CalEnviroScreen Score: 49% (CalEnviroScreen 4.0)

Description of Inspection

On June 1-2, 2022, CARB staff went door to door to speak with residents in the Morningstar community. Inspectors listened to residents' concerns about the leaking oil wells in the Kern Bluff field adjacent to the community. The nearest well, owned by Sunray Petroleum, is 370 feet from the neighborhood. Figure 1, on the next page,

shows a map of the Morningstar residential areas relative to plugged and idle wells, based on information from Well Finder.



Figure 1: The map of the Morningstar community, where CARB staff conducted interviews. The yellow pins indicate plugged wells. The red pin is the closest idle well to the community.

Inspectors went to a total of 43 homes and talked with 12 separate homeowners about their experiences. Most people were not home or did not answer the door. CARB left voice recordings on people’s front door ring cameras to inform them of the reason for our visit and provide each homeowner with a phone number to call if they wanted CARB to return. As of the date of this report, a few homeowners have reached out to CARB to request an inspector return and screen their homes for methane.

Of the 12 homeowners interviewed, 3 reported having symptoms that they believe to be consistent with gas exposure (e.g., headaches, chronic fatigue, and muscle or joint soreness) since moving to the community of Morningstar. Each of these residents reported that they lived healthy and active lives before moving to the area. Morningstar is a new development, and most of the homeowners have lived there for fewer than two years.

All the homeowners that were interviewed allowed CARB to screen their properties (outside only) for methane using a Detect-Pak Infrared (DP-IR). Inspectors did not detect methane above background levels in the screening locations on either day.

Works Cited

"CalEnviroScreen 4.0." *California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment*, 20 Oct. 2021, <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.

"Well Finder" *CalGEM*, n.d., <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/wellfinder/#openModal/-118.90555/35.40151/18>. Accessed 21 Jun. 2022.