



NEWS

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Bay Area Air District Reaches Landmark Settlement with Tesoro Refinery to Reduce Emissions

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) has reached a landmark settlement agreement with the Tesoro Refinery which requires the facility to eliminate the use of atmospheric blowdown systems at their facility near Martinez by 2010. As part of the agreement, the Tesoro Refinery has committed to making the changes on an accelerated timeline, conducting additional monitoring of the systems until they are removed and has paid \$48,000 in penalties.

“The agreement reached between the Air District and Tesoro Refinery represents a victory for the community neighboring the Tesoro Refinery and the entire Bay Area,” said Air District Executive Officer Jack P. Broadbent.

Unlike typical blowdown systems that recover or combust harmful emissions, atmospheric blowdown systems treat hydrocarbon vapors with steam which is then emitted directly to the atmosphere. Although all Bay Area refineries have blowdown systems in their process, atmospheric blowdown systems are only found at the Tesoro Refinery.

“Concerns from the community over air emissions at the Tesoro Refinery prompted the Air District to review these systems as part of our 2001 Clean Air Plan,” said District Counsel Brian C. Bunger. “The Air District determined that air quality violations at the Tesoro Refinery, as well as concerns from the community, could be addressed through existing regulations, and that determination led to this agreement.”

As part of the agreement, the Air District has required Tesoro to re-engineer their system to eliminate the use of atmospheric blowdown systems by 2010. Once that process is complete, hydrocarbon emissions will either be recovered within the refinery or combusted to minimize harmful emissions.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is the public agency that is authorized to regulate stationary sources of air pollution in the nine Bay Area counties. For more information, visit www.baaqmd.gov.

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