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Air District fines Marathon Martinez Refinery \$5 million

Company to pay historic penalty for air quality violations

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District announced today that it has fined the Marathon Martinez Refinery, which is operated by Marathon subsidiary Tesoro Refining & Marketing Company LLC, \$5 million for air quality violations. This is the second largest penalty ever assessed by the Air District.

This penalty resolves 59 Notices of Violation issued by the Air District between 2018 and 2022. It assesses civil penalties for flaring that occurred when Marathon idled its refinery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Marathon improperly flared vapors from storage tanks and loading racks that remained in operation instead of burning them in its production processes. The company also flared gases related to the shutdown, idling and decommissioning of refinery process units. Much of the refinery was shut down and idled during this time, including the gas plants and related production heaters.

“The health of our communities should be non-negotiable,” said Davina Hurt, chair of the Air District’s Board of Directors. “This substantial penalty demonstrates the Air District Board’s unwavering commitment to hold polluters accountable and safeguard the health of our communities. We must prioritize people over profits. The majority of these penalty funds will be invested back into the community to support projects that improve air quality and bring lasting benefits to those most affected by toxic emissions.”

This penalty also resolves other violations including:

- Improperly venting gases for two hours through a flare that was shut down for maintenance
- Three instances of visible emissions from smoky flares (5 -10 minutes each)
- Several other violations involving excess air pollution emissions, including sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and visible particulate emissions
- Delays in completing necessary repairs

All violations included in this case have been corrected.

The Air District issues Notices of Violation when facilities violate a specific air quality regulation or rule. Violators are required to fix the problem and pay a monetary penalty commensurate with the seriousness of the violation. Corrective actions can include shutting down certain operations immediately or changing operations or equipment to come into compliance.

In May 2024, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board of Directors adopted a groundbreaking policy that directs a significant portion of penalty funds to the communities most impacted by air quality violations. Under this policy, most of these penalty funds will be reinvested in local projects specifically designed to reduce pollution and enhance public health.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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