

**California Environmental Protection Agency Issues Statement
Indicating Intent to Step Up Environmental Enforcement in Response to
Federal Government’s Reduction in Oversight During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

April 15, 2020

Following weeks of a statewide lockdown, the California Environmental Protection Agency (“CalEPA”) issued a statement today addressing how the agency is approaching the COVID-19 emergency and setting compliance expectations for regulated entities facing hardships as a result of the pandemic.

According to the statement, CalEPA will continue to respond, investigate, and act on complaints related to environmental non-compliance. In response to the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s decision to reduce oversight during the COVID-19 emergency, CalEPA intends to fill enforcement gaps while maintaining the agency’s capacity to respond to state emergencies. The agency states that it is prioritizing ongoing clean-up of contaminated sites in order to abate imminent threats to public health or the environment, while ensuring worker safety. The agency also intends to prioritize pollution control in communities most affected by respiratory disease and other environmental issues. According to CalEPA, this decision is based on recent studies suggesting a correlation between these factors and COVID-19 infection susceptibility.

CalEPA’s statement recognizes that some regulated entities may be impacted by the pandemic and require compliance assistance as a result of those impacts. Regulated entities that cannot meet a time-sensitive regulatory requirement or deadline due to a COVID-19 government directive or hardship are instructed to contact the relevant CalEPA branch before having a compliance lapse. The entity must submit a request that clearly articulates the hardship, which will be considered in an expedited fashion.

To read the CalEPA’s statement in full go to: <https://calepa.ca.gov/2020/04/15/calepa-statement-on-compliance-with-regulatory-requirements-during-the-covid-19-emergencycalepa-policy-statement-on-covid-19-and-environmental-enforcement/>

If you would like more information about how to comply with environmental regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact us at Contact@HartmanKingLaw.com.

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