The Department of Environmental Quality has issued a series of demand letters to BP Products North America Incorporated, a subsidiary of BP P.L.C., formerly British Petroleum and Amoco Oil Company, for failing to submit required reports related to contamination from historical releases from leaking underground storage tank systems at eight formerly-owned gasoline stations across Michigan. The letters notify BP that their failure to properly address these issues has resulted in $869,150 in penalties being issued against the company.

Michigan law states that after a release has been discovered, an owner and/or operator is required to submit reports to the DEQ describing the amount of product lost, how far the contamination has moved away from the release area, and whether the contamination is likely to impact human health. Further, they are required to develop and implement a plan for cleaning up the contamination, and the timely submittal of these required reports, within the deadlines prescribed by law, helps the DEQ ensure that contamination is being cleaned up as quickly and as cost effectively as possible prior to any potential risks to human health or the environment.

The DEQ is currently monitoring over 200 former gasoline stations where BP has reported releases from underground tank systems. A study conducted by the DEQ in January 2006, found a noncompliance rate of approximately 60 percent and that 47, or 63 percent, of BP's 74 highest risk sites have not complied with regulations in Michigan's Leaking Underground Storage Tanks statutes.

The subset of sites selected to receive a penalty represents locations where significant risk is present and where BP has received written notification of the noncompliance but has yet to undertake the necessary investigation or cleanup and submit the required reports.

With nearly half of Michigan's population relying on groundwater for their drinking water source, contamination from LUST sites remains a significant problem for the state. Michigan ranks third in the nation, behind Florida and California, for the highest number of releases from LUST sites yet to be cleaned up, with more than 9,000 currently known.

Editor's note: DEQ news releases are available on the department's Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

"Protecting Michigan's Environment, Ensuring Michigan's Future"

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