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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Air Quality Following the Refugio Oil Spill Incident

Following the Refugio Oil Spill Incident on May 19, 2015, there have been a number of questions regarding air quality in Santa Barbara County. In response to specific requests for this information, air testing results will be made public and posted on the Public Health Department website at www.sbcphd.org.

Air quality testing began May 20, 2015 and has continued on a daily basis. To date, the air quality testing in areas accessible to the public indicates that the air is safe to breathe. Because there is no ongoing release at the incident site, it is unlikely that air quality will be affected by this incident at a later date in time; however, any future air testing results that indicate the air is unsafe for the public will result in immediate notifications and beach closure.

There are two approaches to air quality testing. Real-time air monitoring is continuously performed using handheld instruments at multiple locations on a daily basis. In addition, air collection systems were positioned to collect air samples at fixed locations along the coastline over 24-hour periods. These air samples are sent to an independent laboratory for testing and analysis. The air monitoring and sampling plan for the incident is based on widely accepted methodologies and approved by Unified Command. The results of air monitoring and sampling are being reviewed by a multi-agency team of experts, including health professionals and toxicologists.

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