

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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District Attorney



DA 03-605

RELEASE NUMBER

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RELEASE DATE

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Re: People of the State of California v. Jesse Villasana, Case No. 21CR01636

Driver of Oil Tanker Truck Charged in Cuyama River Oil Spill Case

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit of the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office filed charges in Santa Barbara County Superior Court against Jesse Villasana, the driver of an oil tanker truck allegedly responsible for spilling approximately 4,533 gallons of oil into the Cuyama River on March 21, 2020.

The misdemeanor criminal complaint alleges that, while hauling approximately 6,678 gallons of crude oil, Villasana drove at an unsafe speed and made an unlawful turning movement in violation of Vehicle Code Sections 22350 and 22107. These actions allegedly caused the oil tank to roll off Villasana's truck into the Cuyama River, where 4,533 gallons of crude oil were allegedly released in violation of Fish and Game Code Section 5650(a)(1). Villasana is further charged with two violations of Fish and Game Code Section 2000 for allegedly causing the death of at least two birds—a belted kingfisher and a mallard—in connection with the spill.

Villasana is scheduled to be arraigned in the Santa Barbara County Superior Court in Santa Maria on June 25, 2021.

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