



# South Coast Air Quality Management District

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## **INFORMATION ADVISORY & STATUS UPDATE ODORS AT THE SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT'S UPPER OSO RESERVOIR (November 18, 2009)**

### **Background on Odors from the Reservoir**

On Wednesday, October 28, 2009, the South Coast Air Quality Management (AQMD) started to receive odor complaints at our 1-800-CUT-SMOG 24-Hours/Day air quality complaint line regarding sulfur (rotten eggs) type odors in the neighborhoods around the Upper Oso Reservoir, located in the cities of Mission Viejo and Rancho Santa Margarita. The Upper Oso Reservoir is a recycled water reservoir in Orange County and is owned and operated by the Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD). The number of odor complaints received by AQMD in the latter parts of October and early parts of November continued to increase from one or two per day to over 40 complaints on November 11, 2009, where the odor intensity was at its peak in the residential neighborhood just southwest of the Reservoir and 241 Toll Road.

Upon receipt of the first odor complaints, AQMD responded to the odor complaints and launched an investigation to identify the source of the odor complaints (which was determined to be the Upper Oso Reservoir), contacted SMWD to determine cause of the odors and began conducting air monitoring and sampling in the areas surrounding the Reservoir. Also SMWD initiated a number of efforts to mitigate the odors by taking various remediation activities. As a result, the intensity of the odors and the number of odor complaints have decreased significantly since November 11, 2009 and based on the recent remediation activities, it is anticipated that the odors will continue to diminish in the surrounding areas.

### **Health Effects Associated with the Odors from the Reservoir**

*Based on the results of the AQMD's ambient air sampling and analysis done in the residential and commercial areas, AQMD believes that although the type and concentration of odorous compounds released from the Reservoir have caused the residents around the Reservoir some discomfort, irritation, nuisance and other temporary symptoms, the health effects should be of a transient or temporary nature and are not considered alarming or a long-term health concern.* Below please find more detailed information about what has caused the foul odors from the Reservoir, the results of ambient air monitoring conducted by AQMD, the potential health impacts and health risks associated with exposure to the odorous compounds released from the Reservoir and the activities undertaken by AQMD and SMWD to investigate and mitigate the odors.

