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New Santa Barbara Oil Spill Illustrates Unpredictability of Oil Infrastructure

SACRAMENTO—An abandoned pipeline containing oil burst onshore and dumped crude into a culvert leading to the ocean, creating a miles-long oil slick on one of Santa Barbara County’s most popular beaches, Refugio State Beach.

Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips released the following statement:

“Every time we hear about an oil spill, we hold our breath and hope it won’t get worse. So now we are hoping this Santa Barbara spill is rapidly contained and cleaned up.

“Just weeks ago, we learned that the state agencies have been allowing the oil industry to inject dirty oil waste water into clean groundwater. Now we have this spill, from a pipeline that apparently was abandoned and not maintained, and that nobody caught until several barrels of oil had already tumbled into the ocean.

“How many more signals do we need from the oil industry that public health and the environment aren’t at the top of its list when it decides how much to invest in creating its products?

“It’s time we all demand better from this incredibly wealthy, and frequently irresponsible, industry.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club’s 13 chapters and more than 150,000 members in California.