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## **Sierra Club Condemns State Injection Well Practices, Calls for Investigation**

SACRAMENTO—The Associated Press reported today that more than 2,500 injection wells that put aquifers that are federally protected or provide drinking water at risk in California have been permitted by a California agency. At least 46 percent of those—or 1,172—have been permitted in the last four years.

The agency, the Division of Oil Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR), is responsible for permitting oil and gas extraction in the state. The agency continued to permit oil industry injection wells into underground water stores even after warned by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in 2011 and later.

The oil industry uses injection wells to dispose of liquid waste created in the process of drilling for oil. This waste includes a soup of chemicals used in fracking and other well stimulation, as well as contaminated water pulled up from underground during drilling.

The USEPA gave DOGGR until today to produce a plan for halting the practice of allowing oil companies to inject into aquifers that provide drinking water or are federally protected, according to the AP report. The agency has until 2017 to actually stop injection into aquifers that USEPA has not designated for waste disposal.

### **Statement by Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California, in response:**

“It is extraordinarily distressing that for so many years the state has essentially put California’s diminishing water supply in the pathway of serious pollution.

“If this were a one-time incident it would be bad enough. But to permit thousands of questionable wells defies common sense.

“It’s time for an outside investigation into DOGGR’s practices. While USEPA’s calling for a plan to stop injecting into sensitive aquifers is commendable, that’s not enough. It’s time for the U.S. Attorney’s office to investigate how and why this permitting continued even after the federal agency warnings.”

*Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, representing more than 380,000 members and supporters statewide.*