Two California oil companies fined for risk to water

Associated Press, 10-7-14

FRESNO, Calif. - California has fined two oil companies a total of nearly a half-million dollars for dumping oilfield fluid into unlined pits in Kern County.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board said Tuesday the dumping between January 2012 and November 2013 posed a threat to groundwater.

Water board local official Clay Rodgers says the fluid came from fracking and other oil production. Rodgers says authorities found no signs the fluids had contaminated any drinking-water supplies.

The Central Valley water board says the companies fined are Occidental of Elk Hills Inc. and Vintage Production California. The total penalty was $476,784.

Rodgers says authorities are concerned other discharges may have occurred in other unlined pits in the Central Valley, and are working to bring oil-field waste disposal into full compliance with the law.