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Interagency Working Group to Review Independent Scientific Study of Oil Recovery Techniques

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- The California Natural Resources Agency announced today that Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. has created an interagency working group to fully consider the findings and recommendations of an in-depth, independent scientific review of well stimulation, including hydraulic fracturing, in California.

“California already has stringent environmental protections for oil and gas production but we can make the practice even safer,” said Secretary of Natural Resources John Laird. “The interagency working group will meet with the scientists to fully understand their findings and concerns and develop recommendations for appropriate regulatory or legislative changes as needed.”

The working group will carefully review the conclusions and recommendations of an independent scientific assessment completed this month by the California Council on Science and Technology and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The report discusses how hydraulic fracturing and acid well stimulation could affect California’s water, atmosphere, seismic activity, wildlife, vegetation, and human health. It also identifies knowledge gaps and alternative practices that could avoid or mitigate these possible impacts, including a number that have been incorporated into state regulations governing well stimulation treatments.

Signed by Governor Brown in September 2013, Senate Bill 4 by Senator Fran Pavley required the independent scientific review be prepared for the California Natural Resources Agency.

The interagency working group, which will begin meeting later this month, will draw from nine state agencies and departments: the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Public Health, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Department of Toxic Substances Control, California Air Resources Board, Department of Conservation and the California Department of Industrial Relations.

Among the issues to be considered by the interagency team are oil and gas development record-keeping, disclosure and use of chemicals, management of water generated from wells that have been hydraulically fractured, induced seismicity, and monitoring of toxic air contaminants and health risks near oil and gas wells. Nearly all hydraulic fracturing in California occurs in the southwestern portion of the San Joaquin Basin.

The California Council on Science and Technology is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization established in 1988 by the California Legislature to offer expert advice to California policymakers. The Council’s three

volumes on hydraulic fracturing and acid well stimulation were prepared using a National Academies study process that involves careful vetting and checks and balances.

The Council's full report is available here: http://ccst.us/projects/hydraulic_fracturing_public/SB4.php.

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