

# \$70 Million Class Action Settlement Reached For Property Owners Damaged By Plains Pipeline's Santa Barbara Oil Spill

*Class members will receive direct mail notice of the settlement.*

SANTA BARBARA, CA, USA, May 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 1, 2024, nine years after a pipeline ruptured along the Santa Barbara coastline spilling oil onto private property, Refugio State Beach and into the Pacific Ocean, U.S. District Court Judge Philip Gutierrez granted preliminary approval of a \$70 million class action settlement to property owners to



resolve all outstanding class claims (Grey Fox, LLC et. al v. Plains All American Pipeline, L.P., et. al, U.S. District Court, Central District, Case Number 2:16-cv-03157-PSG-JEM). Representing the property owners are Cappello & Noël LLP, Lief Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein LLP and Keller Rohrback LLP.

In 1991, Celeron Pipeline Company of California (predecessor to Plains All American Pipeline), built pipelines on 130 miles of private property to transport crude oil and other liquids from the California coast to inland refinery markets in California. At the time, property owners signed easement contracts allowing Lines 901 and 903 pipelines to be built on their property with the easement contracts stating the pipeline owners would maintain, operate and repair the pipeline as needed.

One year after the May 19, 2015 oil spill, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ("PHMSA") concluded that the cause of the rupture was integrity management failures by its then-owner, Plains.

The Settlement class consists of private owners of 183 class properties. The owner of each of the class properties is proposed to receive at least \$50,000, with average payments of \$230,000.

In addition, Sable Offshore Corp., the current pipeline owner, agrees that the ruptured pipeline

will not be replaced with a second, new pipeline system without first renewing easement agreements and that Sable agrees to safely operate the pipeline under a Federal Consent Decree requiring the defendant to follow requirements for pipeline maintenance and operation under federal regulations. Sable also agrees to take necessary steps to install automatic shutoff valves on the pipeline. In addition, Sable must use the best available safety technologies to restart the pipeline. In exchange, the class agrees that the settling parties may repair and re-open the pipeline and record notice of easement clarifications.

Class members will receive direct mail notice of the settlement. A settlement website and toll-free number will be created to provide settlement details. A fairness hearing is set for September 13, 2024 to determine whether the Settlement should receive final approval. Class members have up to 15 days before the hearing to file a response to the settlement approval.

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