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**MADIGAN SUES PETCO PETROLEUM FOR 61 WATER POLLUTION VIOLATIONS***Attorney General's Complaint Alleges Oil Producer Worst Industry Polluter In Illinois*

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a 61-count complaint was filed recently with the Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) for water pollution violations against Petco Petroleum Corp., alleging that the company is “the worst polluter in the field of Illinois oil production.”

Madigan’s complaint alleges that Petco Petroleum repeatedly failed to maintain and upgrade its wells and drilling equipment to prevent spills onto the ground and into waterways. The complaint documents 61 counts of water pollution violations over the past four years due to recurring oil spills and salt water brine releases at the company’s wells near St. Elmo in Fayette County.

Madigan’s complaint seeks an order requiring the Indiana-based company to pay civil penalties that will deter future spills and to establish an effective plan of preventative maintenance.

“Petco Petroleum’s record demonstrates that it has repeatedly violated the state’s environmental laws,” Madigan said. “The company must pay for its pollution and be required to take preventative steps.”

The company is authorized to operate approximately 1,200 oil wells and 400 injection wells in accordance with permits issued by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Producers such as Petco use a production method that involves pumping large volumes of salt water into wells to extract crude oil from the ground.

In 1999, Petco Petroleum was found guilty of violating the Illinois Environmental Protection Act in Jefferson County Circuit Court and ordered to pay civil penalties and attorney’s fees and to submit a preventive maintenance plan. In 2005, an enforcement action was filed under the Illinois Oil and Gas Act in Sangamon County Circuit Court for 168 spills. In 2006, the IPCB imposed civil penalties and ordered the company to cease and desist from violating the Environmental Protection Act. In all, more than \$350,000 in civil penalties have been imposed on the company.

Assistant Attorney General Christine Zeivel is handling the case for Madigan’s Environmental Bureau.

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