

## Plan to truck oily sand out of Guadalupe oil field gets green light

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By early August, managers of the Guadalupe oil field in the southwesternmost corner of San Luis Obispo County expect to start shipping tens of thousands of truckloads of oily sand to the Santa Maria landfill.

Last week, the state Coastal Commission denied an appeal by a group of Santa Maria residents, removing the last regulatory hurdle for the project.

"This certainly gives us the green light to go ahead," said Chevron project manager Gonzalo Garcia. Chevron recently purchased Unocal Corp., the previous owner of the oil field.

The project calls for about 70 trucks a day over four to five years to haul approximately 860,000 cubic yards of contaminated sand. The sand will be used as cover material at the landfill, which is being closed.

The group of Santa Maria residents that appealed the project to the Coastal Commission said Santa Barbara County residents had not received adequate public notice.

However, the commission found the appeal to be baseless and refused to hear it.

The project is intended to solve two water quality problems, Garcia said.

In addition to expediting the closure of the landfill, the project also gives Chevron a place to dispose of contaminated sand that was dug up because it was in danger of being washed into the ocean or the Santa Maria River.

"This has been a long process," Garcia said. "This is the best environmental solution."

The Guadalupe oil field is the site of one of the nation's biggest oil spills.

Millions of gallons of a kerosene-like substance that was used to thin the viscous crude oil were spilled at the field.

State water officials have ordered the oil company to dig up all those areas of contamination that pose an immediate danger of polluting water.

County planners estimate that at least 47,000 truck trips will be needed to haul all of the sand to the landfill.