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Pollution linked to Aerojet site closes well

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--Contamination from **Aerojet** has once again shut down an Arden-Cordova Water Service well in Gold River, a representative of the service's parent company said Nov. 29. And another well in Rancho Cordova could be off-line by summer.

James D. Carson, district manager for the Southern California Water Co., Arden-Cordova's parent company, said tests of the well on Gold Country Boulevard showed more than 2 parts per trillion of NDMA, or N-nitrodimethylamine. NDMA is a compound from liquid rocket fuel that is known to cause cancer in laboratory animals.

Carson said the well was shut down once in 1999 with the same reading. At that time, further testing showed no contamination, so the well was put back into service. Additional testing will be done, Carson said.

Arden-Cordova serves 13,500 customers in Rancho Cordova and Gold River.

The other well, at Zinfandel Drive and Folsom Boulevard, showed more than 13 parts per billion of perchlorate, a component of rocket fuels, fireworks and other explosives that the Environmental Protection Agency says is toxic to the human thyroid gland. The EPA says 4 ppb is an acceptable level. Perchlorate is the most common contaminant in groundwater fouled by **Aerojet's** past practices.

Rancho Cordova resident Larry Ladd, who attended the Neighborhood Eyes meeting Nov. 29 as a technical adviser, said the Gold River well already had shown some TCE, or trichloroethylene, and PCE, or perchloroethylene. "As soon as they have either of those and NDMA, they shut down the well," Ladd said in an interview Monday, adding that the chemicals, in combination, are more injurious to humans.

Residents, he said, are receiving water from Arden-Cordova's surface water sources and deeper wells already drilled in Gold River and Rancho Cordova. But in the long run, he predicted, "that's not going to work."

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has asked **Aerojet** for a contingency plan to supply additional water in the event that contaminants are found at certain levels in other wells. This is separate from the long-term water replacement plan - based on the same trigger levels - in the modified

consent decree.

The decree lays out the legal agreement between **Aerojet** and state and federal agencies on who will pay for cleanup and how it will be done, and provides details on how to replace lost water supplies.

Alex MacDonald, a senior engineer with the board, said Monday that lawyers for Sacramento County and Arden-Cordova are negotiating over a well planned at Rossmoor Bar Park on the American River Parkway in Rancho Cordova. He said the parties are working on an agreement for **Aerojet** to obtain a county permit to drill the well. **Aerojet** would then hand it over to Arden-Cordova to operate.

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