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DA Zimmer Announces the Filing of Criminal and Civil Complaint Against Toxic Waste Polluters
People v. Ron Israel Engelberg and 25 Hill Properties Incorporated:
Kern County Superior Court Cases 26BFA00435 & 26CUB00301

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a criminal and civil complaint against Ronald I. Engelberg as well as 25 Hill Properties Inc. Engelberg is the owner, director, and chief executive officer of 25 Hill Properties Inc. 25 Hill Properties Inc. holds multiple oil and gas leases near the city of Taft, including the Jameson Trust. These properties contain 48 oil wells and has been in operation since 2000.

On January 12, 2021, KCDA filed a civil complaint against 25 Hill in Kern County Superior Court case number BCV-21-100073 over their mismanagement of the leases. Representatives from the California Department of Conservation (CalGEM) found over 100 violations that included failing to report oil spills, illegal disposal of hazardous wastes, and attempts to cover up these violations.

On February 17, 2022, according to a settlement reached by the parties, a final judgment and permanent injunction was issued. Along with financial penalties and an agreement to comply with existing laws, the Court designated CalGEM to oversee compliance with the injunctive provisions of the judgment for a period of five years.

It is alleged that after the preliminary injunction was issued, CalGEM personnel issued 446 new violations and identified 25 violations that were present prior to the issuance of the permanent injunction. The criminal charges include felony charges related to the illegal storage and dumping of toxic waste as well as illegally spilling oil in the waterways of California. The civil complaint seeks recovery efforts, fines, fees, and other penalties associated with the illegal dumping of toxic waste.

The defendant in the criminal case was arraigned on February 2, 2026. A status hearing for both the criminal and civil cases is set for February 5, 2026. As with any criminal case, a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until the charges are proven in court beyond a reasonable doubt.