

Dry Cleaner Investigation and Remediation

Anthony Brown was retained by the City of Modesto and Modesto Redevelopment Agency (RDA) to provide technical support concerning tetrachloroethene (PCE) contamination from numerous commercial dry cleaners in the City of Modesto, California.

Chlorinated solvents, notably PCE, have been detected in water supply wells within the City. The likely sources of the PCE are the numerous (>80) active and historic dry cleaners located throughout Modesto. Some had well-documented and extensive groundwater contamination; while others had limited data on soil and groundwater contamination.

The City and RDA initiated litigation against the owners, operators, equipment manufacturers, solvent distributors, and solvent manufacturers. One of the goals of the litigation was to recover funds to clean-up contaminated soil and groundwater beneath public right-of-way, and provide well head treatment at water supply wells. The work scope included, but was not limited to, the following:

- Review of existing hydrogeological and analytical data for the dry cleaners;
- Field investigations at selected dry cleaners to confirm and quantify contamination, and identify specific release mechanisms;
- Field investigations in public right-of-way next to selected dry cleaners to confirm, quantify, and delineate contamination;
- Oversight of investigation and remediation programs implemented by the responsible parties (RPs);
- Development of a regional hydrogeological conceptual model as a basis for a groundwater flow and solute transport model;
- Design of soil and groundwater remediation systems to address contamination beneath public right-of-way;
- Preparation of cost estimates to implement the proposed remediation; and
- Litigation support, including preparation of an expert report, a 17-day deposition, and trial testimony.