

Calif. environmentalists sue over oil industry water practices

By Rory Carroll, Reuters

California environmental groups filed a lawsuit on Thursday that seeks to halt oil industry injections of drilling wastewater into nearly 500 wells, a practice they say threatens fresh water supplies and is particularly critical in light of a prolonged drought.

The lawsuit was filed in state court against California's oil drilling regulator, the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR), by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Sierra Club and Earthjustice.

Oil drilling in California produces far more water than oil, most of which is not suitable for drinking. The wastewater is typically injected back underground.

The lawsuit also wants the DOGGR to stop allowing oil companies to pump steam into about 2,000 additional wells injecting into aquifers, which they say are protected under federal law. Oil drilling companies inject water and steam to increase the flow of oil to the surface.

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