

Tahoe Queen faces fine for 2015 oil spill



Oil sheen on Lake Tahoe near the Tahoe Queen in March 2015.
Photo/Provided

By Lake Tahoe News

Aramark faces a nearly \$5,000 fine for having spilled hydraulic fluid from the Tahoe Queen into Lake Tahoe last year.

Aramark, the parent company of the paddle-wheeler based out of the Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe, has until March 10 to respond. If the company disputes the fine, there will be a hearing in May.

Lahontan Regional Water Control Board could have fined the company \$10,000. Instead the penalty is \$4,983.

The spill occurred March 5, 2015. Four gallons reached the lake. Nine in total leaked from the vessel.

A resident who had taken her dog to the beach first notified officials of the problem. The animal came out of the water with an oily substance on its fur.

“When the complainant returned to the marina to identify a potential source of the oily substance, she observed an oily and greasy-to-the-touch sheen on the water where the dog had been,” according to Lahontan documents.

According to information provided to the water board from Aramark, “Maintenance activities on the Tahoe Queen vessel’s paddlewheel had been occurring prior to the discharge event. A contractor for the discharger, Advanced Marine, was conducting the maintenance. The contractor disconnected the hydraulic lines, but the lines were not adequately capped per industry standard (i.e., steel caps). The contractor capped the lines using only plastic and duct tape to prevent dust and water from entering the lines. The contractor did not create a pressurized seal to prevent oil from spilling from the lines because the contractor believed the engine was static and would not be started.”