



# SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Baker Commodities to Pay \$400,000 and Stop Animal Rendering**

*Additional Operational Changes Will Reduce Odors at Vernon Facility as Part of Settlement*

**DIAMOND BAR** – Today, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) finalized a settlement with Baker Commodities Inc. (Baker) in Vernon, California, for permit and other rule violations associated with its rendering operations. As part of the settlement, the facility will pay \$400,000 and will stop rendering raw animal materials.

Violations settled include storing raw rendering materials outside of an enclosure for more than four hours, failure to keep its facility clean and in good operating condition and not enclosing portions of its facility, including a butcher trimmings receiving area and certain wastewater operations such as an open-air pit. Additionally, the facility did not properly seal or close other processing areas to minimize leaks and prevent odors from escaping.

In addition to the penalty, Baker will:

- Permanently cease rendering raw animal products and surrender all associated permits within 14 days.
- Expand its raw materials receiving area enclosure to ensure that trucks carrying raw animal materials drive fully inside the enclosed area prior to offloading.
- Submit new permit applications to receive and ship raw materials that will be subject to appropriate rule requirements.
- Build an enclosure over three different wastewater areas. If the facility starts collections operations before the enclosures are completed, the facility will pay \$15,000 a month until all three enclosures are completed and operational.
- Not use the Open-Air Pit to store any “sludge” or water-bearing waste unless it is in an enclosure, covered container, or closed system.
- Not use the outdoor dock area to receive raw materials, including butcher trimmings.

In 2022, Baker filed a \$200 million lawsuit against South Coast AQMD. The agency vigorously defended the action, defeating the company’s motions and preserving the order for abatement. Under the terms of the settlement, Baker’s lawsuit will be dismissed, and the company will pay South Coast AQMD \$35,000 for its attorney’s fees. South Coast AQMD will pay nothing.

The facility, located at 4020 Bandini Blvd., converts animal materials collected from meat processing plants, supermarkets, and butcher shops into animal feed or other useful products. In June 2022, South Coast AQMD filed a petition for an Order for Abatement against Baker for violations of the agency’s

rules, including a rule designed to reduce odors from rendering facilities. South Coast AQMD's independent Hearing Board issued the Order in September 2022. Subsequently, in April 2023, the Hearing Board approved a modified order that allows Baker to resume its restaurant trap grease and wastewater processing operations. In April 2024, the facility filed a petition to Modify the Order for Abatement a second time. The facility is seeking to start collections operations where it will receive raw rendering materials into its enclosure to temporarily store the materials before moving it to another licensed rendering facility. The Hearing Board may require operating conditions if it decides to grant Baker's petition. The hearing is set for May 29, 2024.

South Coast AQMD continues to conduct odor surveillance near all rendering plants and respond to public complaints. The public can file an odor complaint by calling 1-800-CUT-SMOG, using the online complaint portal on our webpage, or directly from our smartphone app. More information on South Coast AQMD's ongoing activities related to rendering plants in the City of Vernon can be found [here](#).

South Coast AQMD is the regulatory agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at [www.aqmd.gov](http://www.aqmd.gov), download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter) and [Instagram](#).

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