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Calpine Plants Cause Earthquakes in California, L.A. Times Says

April 12 (Bloomberg) -- Small earthquakes have become more common in the town of Anderson Springs, California, since Calpine Corp. began injecting millions of gallons of wastewater underground to help create steam used to produce electricity at two-dozen geothermal plants, the Los Angeles Times reported.

The town of 350 people has recorded an average of 1 1/2 earthquakes a day for seven years. There have been 3,000 temblors since 2002 in the surrounding area, making it one of the most seismically active regions in the U.S., the newspaper said. Anderson Springs is about 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of San Francisco.

Calpine, the Northern California Power Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory said last year that the plants are the cause of most of the earthquakes, although they didn't connect the injections to specific quakes or a rise in the number, the paper said.

Calpine and the power agency say they want to compensate residents to show goodwill as long as they don't have to admit formal liability, the paper said, citing J.L. "Bill" Smith of the power agency. The plants generate 1 million megawatts, making them the largest geothermal producer.

(LAT 4-12 1)

To contact the reporter on this story:
Chris Dolmetsch in Princeton at cdolmetsch@bloomberg.net.

To contact the editor of this story:
Glenn Holdcraft at gholdcraft@Bloomberg.net.

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