



Single-Walled UST Outreach and RUST March 22, 2022



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2022

Presenter-Johnny Wales

- **Redhorse** contractor supporting State Water Board's UST Leak Prevention Unit and Office of Enforcement (funding from USEPA)
- Point of contact for Replacing, Removing, or Upgrading Underground Storage Tanks (**RUST**) program
- Assigned to outreach to Single-Walled UST Owners and Operators
- UST Designated Operator/Certified CA UST Inspector



Objectives

- Single-Walled UST universe overview
- Discussion of outreach efforts to single-walled UST facilities and Single-Walled UST Closure Commitment Plans
- Review of Commitment Plan response and data gathered so far
- **RUST** program refresher, updates, and numbers



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Single-Walled UST Closure

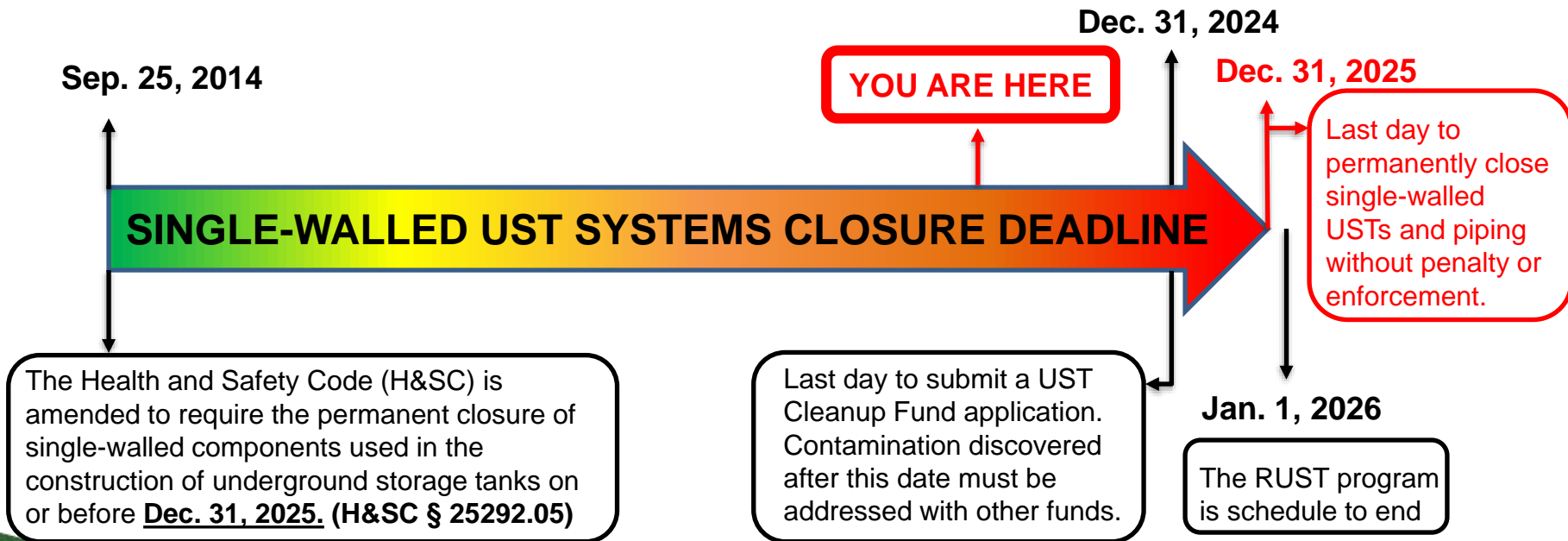
- Since 2017, 24% of single-walled UST closures have resulted in the discovery of a new unauthorized release, compared to 9% of double-walled UST closures (this is from a very credible dataset with more than 1,000 facilities)
- Per Health and Safety Code Section 25292.05, USTs with non-exempt single-walled components must be closed on or before December 31, 2025



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Deadlines



Deadlines (continued)

- UST Cleanup Fund will NOT be an acceptable FR mechanism in 2025, if not extended
- Insurance companies are very unlikely to cover aging single-walled USTs that do not have a *spotless* compliance record...



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Obstacles

- Shortages of contractors and UST equipment
- \$\$\$
- O/O uncertainty about future business plans
- Potentially confusing CERS reporting requirements
- Long lead times for permitting and funding applications



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Single-Walled USTs in California

CA Single-Walled USTs, per CERS (as of October 2021)			
	SW Tank	DW Tank SW Piping	Total
USTs	1,911	575	2,486
Facilities	608	339	1,021

Total facilities is less than the sum of SW tank and DW tank with SW piping because some facilities have both types of UST system



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Single-Walled USTs in California

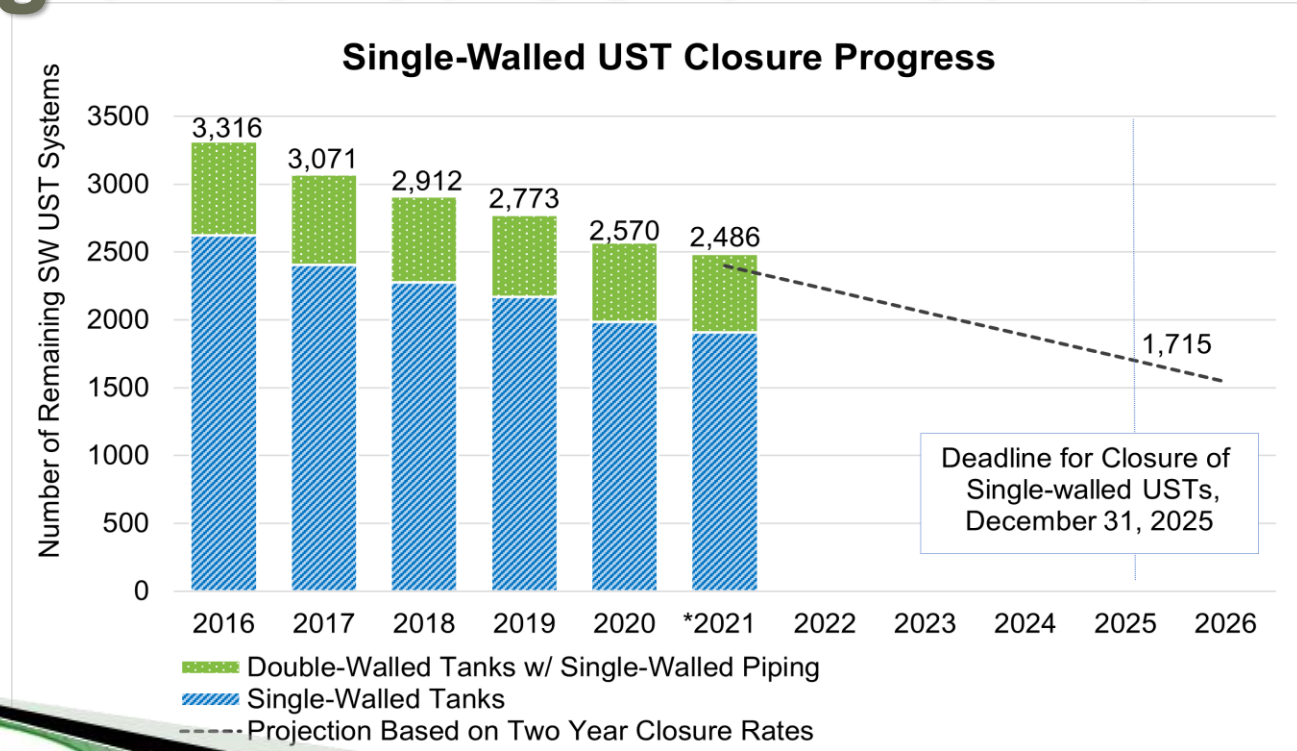
Single-Walled UST Closures			
Year	SW Tanks	DW Tanks SW Piping	Total
2017	216	29	245
2018	129	30	159
2019	108	31	139
2020	185	18	203
2021*	75	9	84

CERS Data continues to be corrected, so the total USTs and total closures in past periods in this report may not match previous reports



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Single-Walled USTs in California



Improperly Abandoned USTs

- Property owners may be eligible for **RUST** grants of up to \$70,000 to fund UST removal, despite these facilities being out of compliance, via the **RUST** grant eligibility waiver process
- State Water Board and USEPA have resumed efforts to resolve abandoned UST sites and assist property owners with obtaining grants for UST removal



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Abandoned USTs-RUST grant waivers and loans

- Many of the normal eligibility requirements for RUST grants, (current permits, retail status, lack of violations) can be waived if the UST project is removal-only, and the applicant does not have the finances to qualify for a RUST loan
- RUST loans are available to eligible applicants to fund UST removal projects



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Outreach Efforts to Owners and Operators of Single-Walled USTs

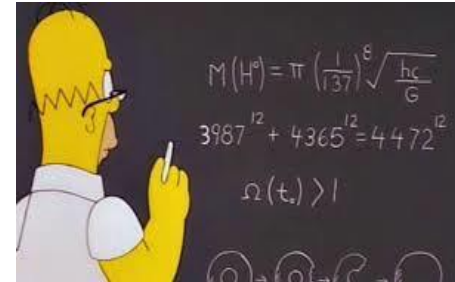
- 861 UST Closure Commitment Plan packages sent so far
 - Package contains: Survey form, narrative letter, **RUST** Fact Sheets, invitations to webinars in December '21 and January '22
- Previous outreach efforts have included letters and phone calls to every single-walled UST facility



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Commitment Plan Project Objectives

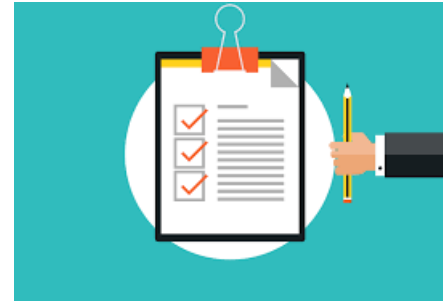
- Engage Owner/Operator community in an interactive way
- Remind O/Os of compliance responsibilities
- Share information about funding and other useful resources
- Gather data and draw inferences about single-walled closure trends



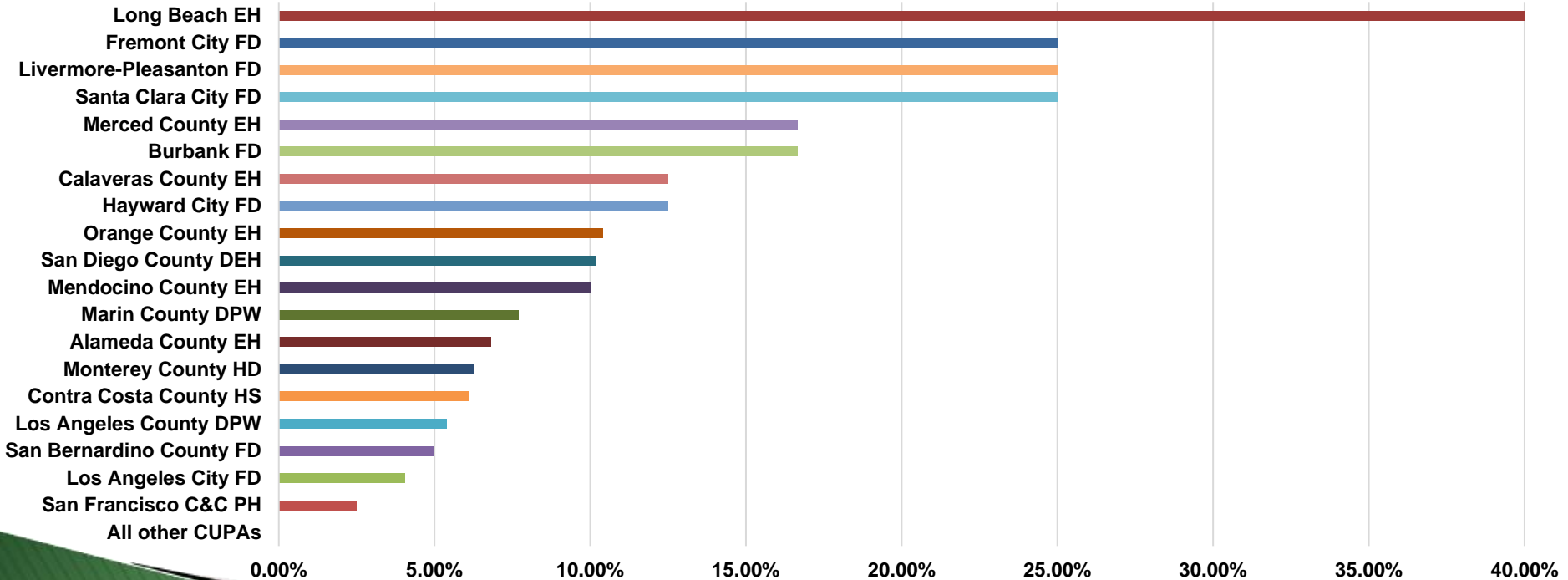
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Commitment Plan Responses

- Current proportion of completed/sent Commitment Plan forms: 4.53%
- Other responses have ranged from:
 - Clarification and correction of CERS data
 - Interest in RUST funding
 - “...but I have double-walled tanks”
 - Discussions of secondary containment exemptions

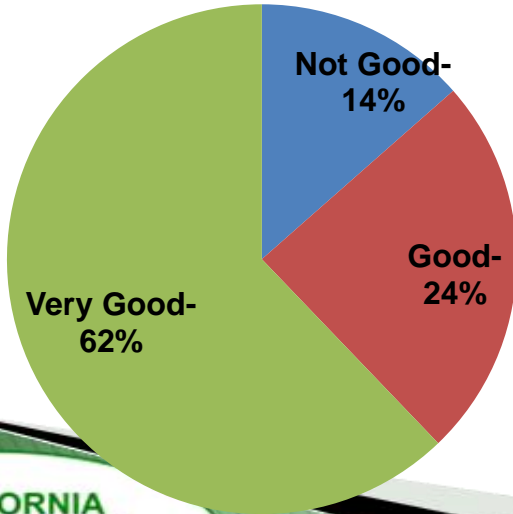


Commitment Plan Response Rate (as of February 2022)

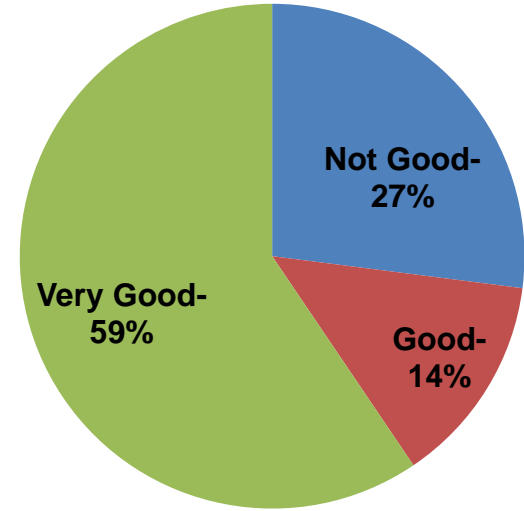


Commitment Plan Metrics

*How would you rate your understanding of how long the **process to close** and, if desired, replace the single-walled UST system(s) at this facility will take?*

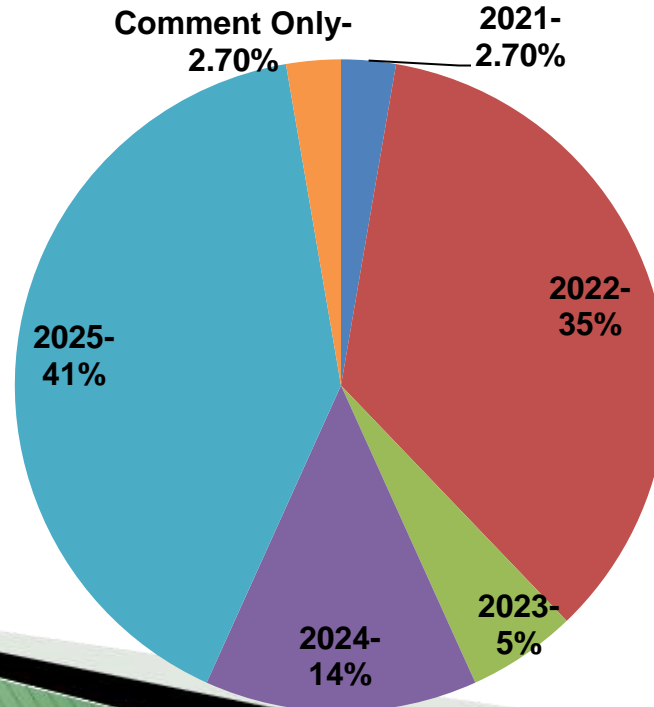


*How would you rate your understanding of the **costs to close** and, if desired, replace the single-walled UST system(s) at this facility?*



Commitment Plan Metrics

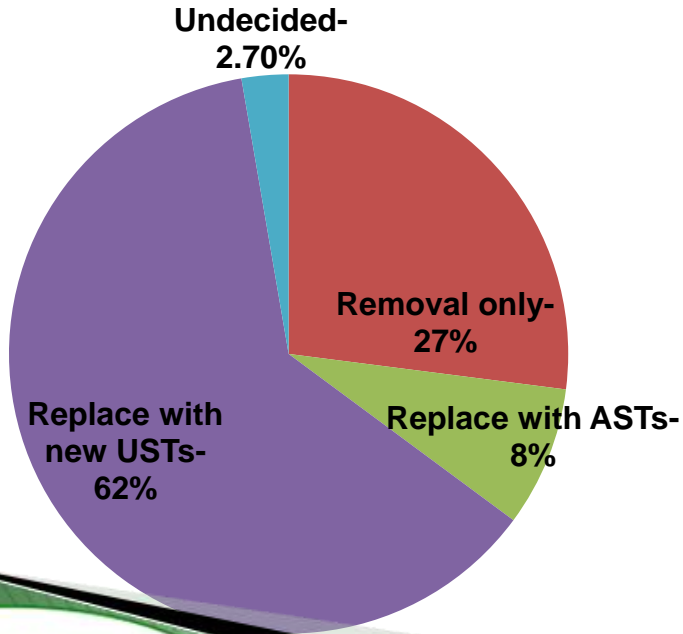
When will you permanently close the single-walled UST system(s) at your facility?



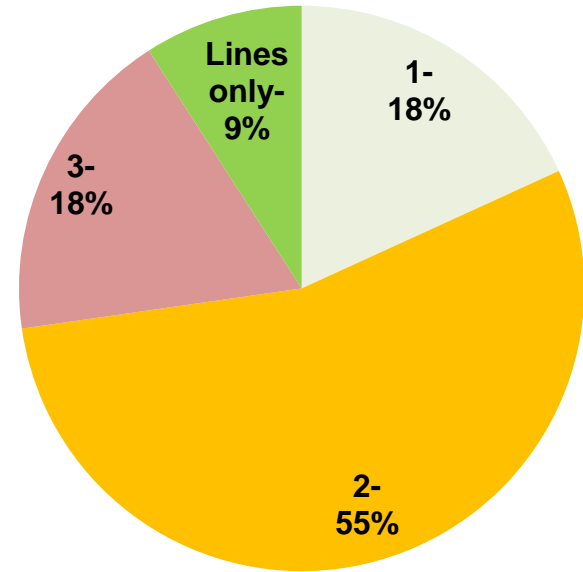
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Commitment Plan Metrics

*Will the single-walled UST system(s) be
replaced or removed?*



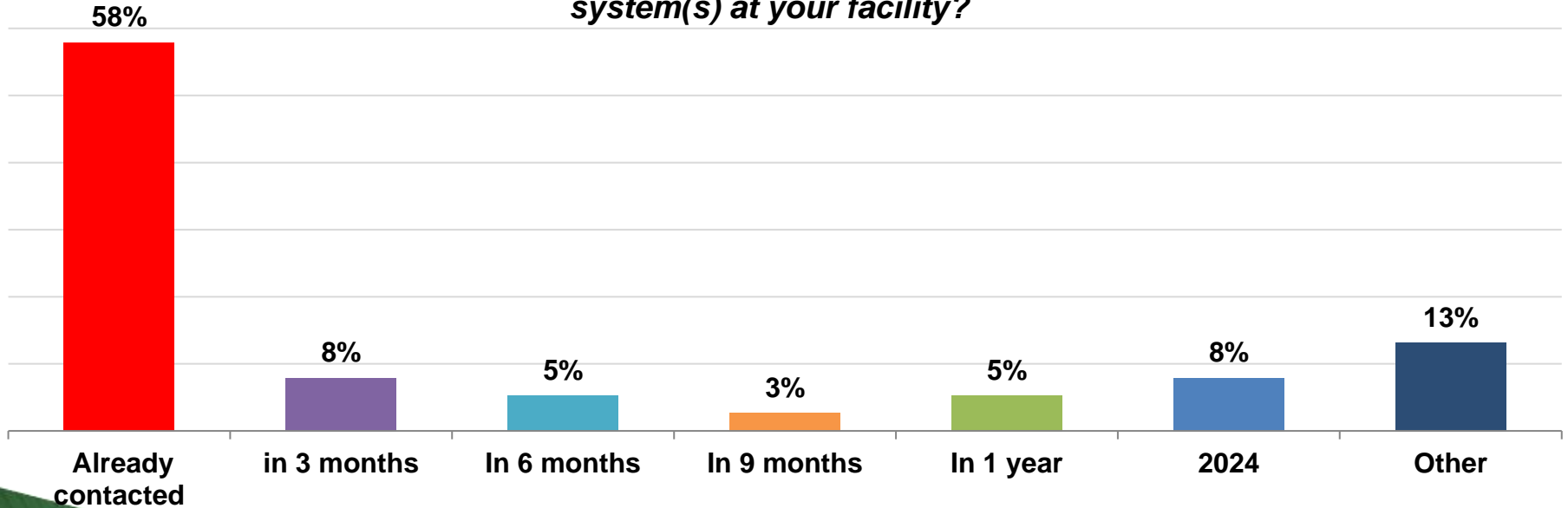
of new USTs to be installed



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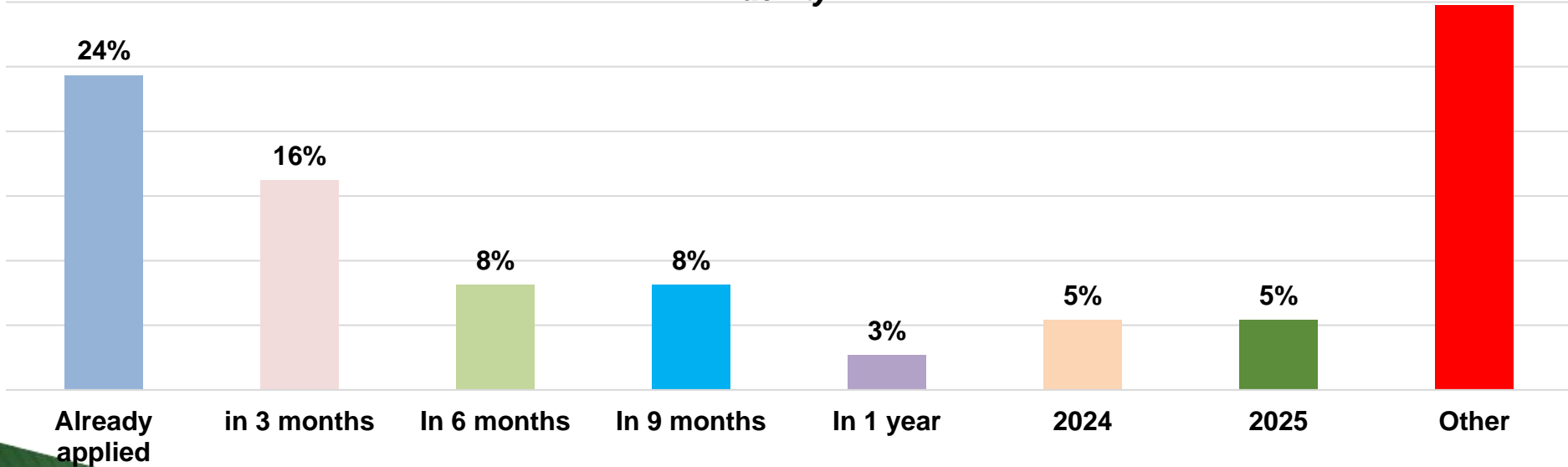
Commitment Plan Metrics

When will you contact a UST contractor about closing the single-walled UST system(s) at your facility?



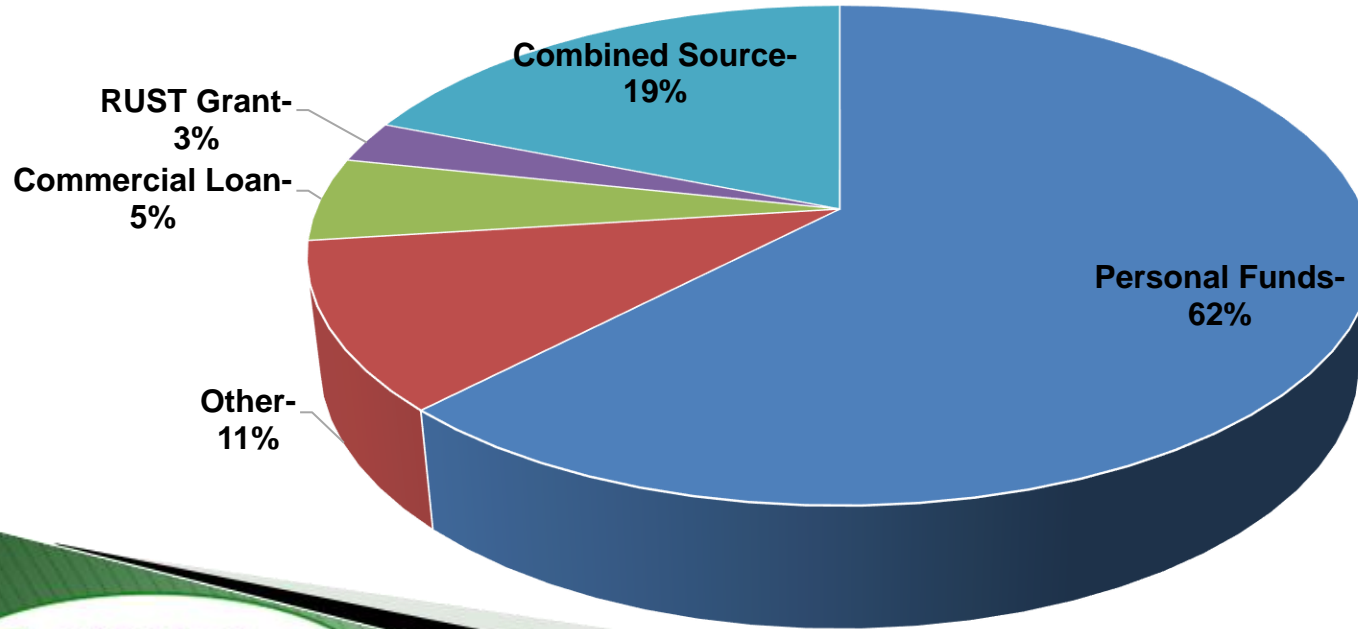
Commitment Plan Metrics

When will you apply for permits to close the single-walled UST system(s) at your facility?



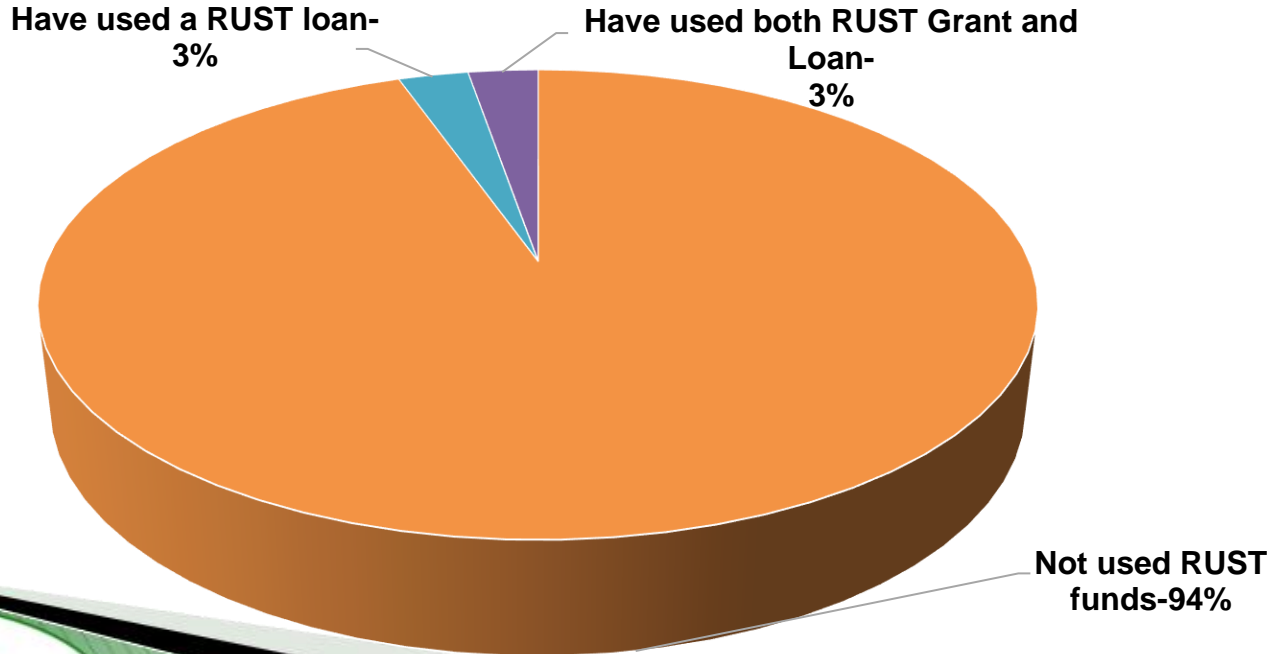
Commitment Plan Metrics

How will you finance closure of the single-walled UST system(s) at this facility and, if desired, installation of double-walled UST system(s)?



Commitment Plan Metrics

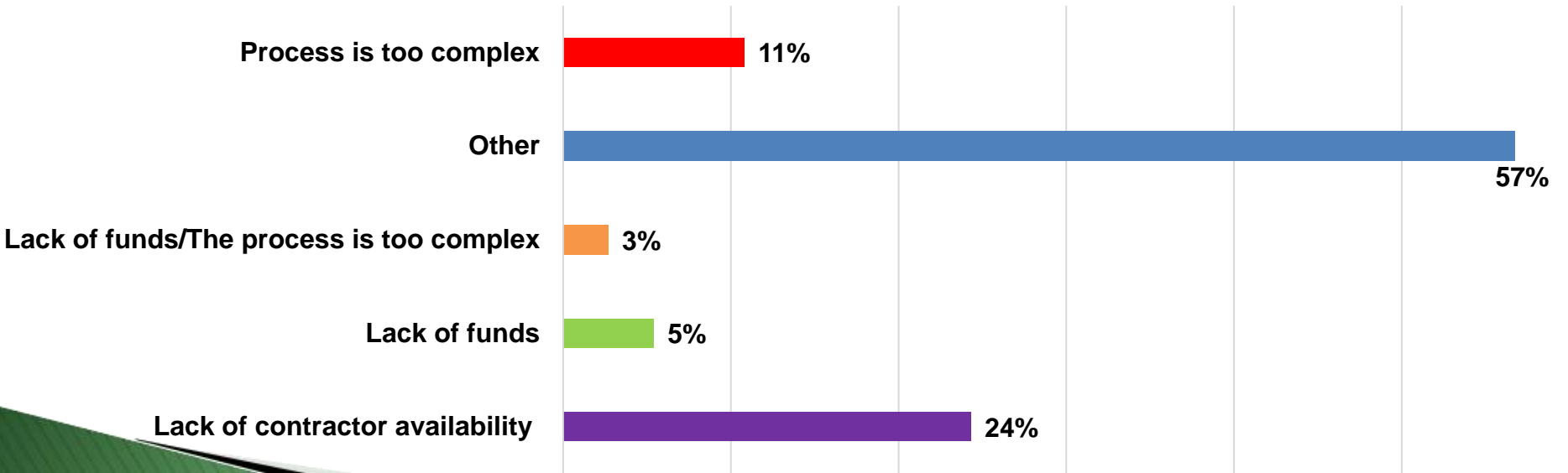
Have you previously made use of RUST funding?



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Commitment Plan Metrics

What do you think will be the **biggest barrier** to the timely closure of single-walled USTs at this facility?



Commitment Plan Metrics

*What do you think will be the **biggest barrier** to the timely closure of single-walled USTs at this facility? (Sample “Other” responses)*

- “CA might be EV-only in 2035”
- “Tank availability”
- “Old tanks hard to remove due to location”
- “Permitting delays”
- “None”
- “Neighborhood opposition to building a new gas station”
- “Lack of funds to qualify for a loan”
- “Ground lease term”
- “COVID-19”
- “All of the above!!! Please help!!!”



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Preliminary Conclusions

- Owners/Operators seem to want to either close single-walled USTs as soon as possible, or wait until 2025
- O/Os continue to have questions about secondary containment exemptions (or the lack thereof)
- CERS needs to be correct to avoid having tanks/components flagged as subject to closure/upgrade requirements



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What's Next?

- Will find ways to increase Commitment Plan response rate—may enlist CUPA help and include blank Commitment Plan and/or Fact Sheet with annual permit renewal
- Completed Commitment Plans will be part of single-walled UST pages once they are brought into GeoTracker
- Will continue to assist property owners with getting **RUST** funding for UST removal, to resolve abandoned UST sites





Any Questions?

Johnny Wales

Redhorse Corporation

Johnny.Wales@Redhorsecorp.com

(804) 852-7274

Robert Smith

CA State Water Resources Control Board

Robert.Smith@Waterboards.ca.gov

(916) 323-2095

