



Media Release

State Water Board Directs Sacramento County Sanitation District to Upgrade Sewage Treatment to Protect Human Health and Aquatic Life *District must Comply with Regional Water Board Permit*

For Immediate Release
December 4, 2012

Contact: George Kostyrko
Phone: 916-341-7365

Sacramento – Today, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) directed the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (District) to comply with requirements to treat wastewater discharged into the Sacramento River for pathogens detrimental to human health and pollutants that harm aquatic life as far as 30 miles downstream.

The State Water Board order for Water Quality Petitions A-2144(a) and A-2144(b) (Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant) essentially upholds a Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) Permit issued two years ago for the 30-year-old wastewater treatment plant.

That permit, issued by the Central Valley Water Board in December 2010, required the District to upgrade its sewage treatment plant to provide not only tertiary treatment for advanced removal of pollutants, but also to treat for ammonia and nitrates, which are nutrients that in large quantities are harmful to aquatic life. That permit was appealed by the District and the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA). This State Water Board action dismisses most of the contentions raised by the District and CSPA. In its order, the State Water Board adjusted calculations (due to a calculation error), amending the final effluent limitations for ammonia.

Tertiary treatment is an advanced level of wastewater treatment. In this case, it would enhance coagulation and filter the wastewater to remove total organic carbon, suspended solids, oxygen-demanding compounds, metals and pathogens.

At this time, the plant provides a secondary level treatment. The Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is the only remaining large wastewater treatment plant within the Central Valley Water Board's jurisdiction discharging to the Delta which does not provide tertiary treatment and significant nutrient reduction.

The State Water Board order concludes that a significant portion of pathogens present in the Sacramento River immediately downstream from the District's point of discharge are of human origin and originate from the District's discharge due to its current treatment methods.



The Central Valley Water Board found that the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant contributes approximately 99 percent of the ammonia entering the Delta. Excessive ammonia deteriorates the environment and is toxic to some forms of aquatic life. In some cases, the effect on aquatic life is measurable up to 30 miles downstream from the existing facility.

The State Water Board has reassessed some assumptions made by the Central Valley Water Board related to nitrates. Rather than remand the permit back to the Central Valley Water Board, the order upholds the permit's effluent limitation for environmental protection and gives the District a clear idea of what standard to meet to assist in the protection of the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem.

The permit grants the District up to ten years before some of the final effluent limitations take effect.

To see a copy of the proposed order the State Water Board acted on, please visit: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_info/agendas/2012/dec/120412_11.pdf

Join Us On Twitter! <https://twitter.com/#!/H2OBoardsNews>