

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Central Valley Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**REGIONAL WATER BOARD TO HEAR WATER POLLUTION CASE  
AGAINST HILMAR CHEESE COMPANY, INC.**

SACRAMENTO—The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Friday decided to hear an enforcement case against the Hilmar Cheese Company for alleged violations of its permit to discharge sewage from its cheese manufacturing operations.

The Central Valley Board had considered referring the case to the state Attorney General for resolution of the \$4 million civil liability fine against the company.

“After weighing alternatives for resolving this case, the Board determined that it would hear this case in the same manner as it hears all administrative civil liability cases -- through a fair, thorough and open hearing process,” said Bob Schneider, Chair of the Central Valley Regional Water Board.

Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc. operates a cheese processing plant about one-half mile north of the unincorporated community of Hilmar. The case stems from the discharge of 821,000,000 gallons of wastewater to land adjacent to the cheese processing plant.

Hilmar’s discharges exceeded permit limits for salt and caused waste to be discharged to waters of the state. The violations were documented and reported to the Board in Hilmar’s self-monitoring reports. On Jan. 26, 2005, the Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Board issued a \$4 million administrative civil liability complaint against Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc. for the alleged violations. The violations were documented and reported to the Board in Hilmar Co. Inc.’s self-monitoring reports.

Referral of enforcement cases to the Attorney General is a procedure available to the Water Boards, provided by state water quality laws, and the State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Enforcement policy. The Water Boards have discretion in determining which enforcement cases they retain and which cases are appropriate for referral. The majority of enforcement cases are handled administratively by the Water Boards.

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