



Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Central Valley Water Board and City of Vacaville Settle Wastewater Violations in Solano County

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Contact: Wendy Wyels
Phone: (916) 464-4835

SACRAMENTO – The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) and the city of Vacaville have agreed to a \$170,578 settlement regarding a 2015 spill of more than 200,000 gallons of highly chlorinated wastewater into a creek.

“This spill had the potential to seriously impact aquatic life in Alamo Creek,” said Andrew Altevogt, assistant executive officer for the Regional Water Board. “Since the spill, the city has made improvements to the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant that should greatly reduce the chance of another incident like this happening again.”

For 46 minutes on Oct. 9, 2015, the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant spilled 211,880 gallons of super-chlorinated wastewater. The discharge took place when the uninterrupted power supply receptacle faulted, causing the computer system to fail and the dechlorination facilities to stop working. In addition, the partially-treated waste was not automatically diverted to the emergency storage pond, and instead flowed into Old Alamo Creek. The chlorinated effluent was 143 times over the one-hour chlorine limit, and 2.5 times over the four-day chlorine limit, which are found in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Regional Water Board.

Since the incident, the city has installed a transfer switch to ensure that a loss of power or a fault to the uninterrupted power supply receptacle will not result in a facility-wide power loss. An alarm has been installed to notify staff if there is a failure of the uninterrupted power supply receptacle, and the emergency diversion gate can now be closed through the plant’s computer system. The installation of these backup measures should help prevent future incidents.

As a condition of the agreement, Vacaville will pay \$88,289 to the State Water Board’s Cleanup and Abatement Account. The remainder of the funds will be used in a Supplemental Environmental Project, in which Vacaville will install a concrete liner in its emergency storage basin at the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant. The emergency storage basin is used to hold wastewater whenever it is suspected that the wastewater has not been treated to the standards required by the NPDES permit. The concrete liner will protect the groundwater



underlying the emergency storage basin, preventing any constituents in the diverted effluent from impacting groundwater. The total cost of the project is estimated to be over \$1 million.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is a California state agency responsible for preservation and enhancement of quality in water resources. For more information, visit: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/>.

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