



Enforcement News

CENTRAL COAST WATER BOARD FINES EL PASO DE ROBLES FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT EFFLUENT VIOLATIONS

**For Immediate Release:
January 23, 2017**

**Contact: Tim Moran
(916) 327-8239**

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) Executive Officer issued a \$495,000 penalty against the City of El Paso de Robles on Friday, Jan. 20.

The penalty stems from the City's violation of effluent limits prescribed in its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The violations occurred from October 3, 2013, through June 27, 2016. The Permit authorizes the City to discharge treated effluent to the Salinas River. The City was unable to achieve compliance for various pollutants during the upgrade of its wastewater treatment plant.

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, also known as the California Water Code, applies to such waste discharges for the protection of water quality and public health. For NPDES discharges such as the City's, the Water Code requires the Regional Water Board to penalize effluent violations by imposing monetary penalties for no less than the mandatory minimum amount of \$3,000 per violation.

The California Water Code also provides for a portion of such penalties to be used for supplemental environment projects (SEPs). SEPs are projects that can be included as part of an Administrative Civil Liability penalty to enhance the beneficial uses of the waters of the State and provide a benefit to the public at large.

The Regional Water Board and City have agreed to direct \$255,000 of the total penalty to SEPs related to the Paso Robles groundwater basin. These SEPs may include support for sustainable groundwater management efforts, groundwater sampling, or assistance to disadvantaged communities to help resolve drinking water issues. The remaining portion of the penalty goes to the Cleanup and Abatement Account.

"Ensuring adequate treatment and control of wastewater discharges to our surface waters is a key component of the Board's responsibility to protect water quality," said Regional Water Board Chairman Jean-Pierre Wolff. "While the City has experienced a very difficult time in complying with its permit's protective standards, it has also turned a significant corner by upgrading its treatment plant to reduce violations and put the City on a path towards exemplary performance."

"In addition," Wolff said, "it is both our and the City's desire that the funds directed toward the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin will substantially offset the violations by improving our collective capacity to more fully understand, protect, preserve and bring to sustainability the basin as a vital water resource."

The State Water Resources Control Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore California's water resources and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. The Central Coast Water Board's vision is to have healthy

C A L I F O R N I A E N V I R O N M E N T A L P R O T E C T I O N A G E N C Y



STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-0100 • www.waterboards.ca.gov





Enforcement News

watersheds. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/>

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

###