



Enforcement News

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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\$700,000 Settlement Proposed for Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority Sewage Discharges into the Mojave River

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The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board staff has reached a \$700,000 settlement with the Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority (VWVRA) addressing five discharges of partially-treated and raw sewage to the Mojave River and its tributaries in Victorville. The discharges occurred between June 2010 and January 2011.

Two of the incidents involved partially-treated sewage being discharged from VWVRA's wastewater treatment facility. The remaining three discharges involved raw sewage released from VWVRA's sewer system. The most significant discharge resulted from storms in December 2010 that ruptured a large sewer pipe under the Mojave River within the Upper Narrows area. The pipe lost nearly 43 million gallons of raw sewage over 15 days until a nearly mile-long bypass could be constructed. The Federal Emergency Management Agency declared a federal emergency for all areas affected by the December 2010/January 2011 storms, including the Mojave River area.

Water Board and VWVRA staffs agreed upon the \$700,000 settlement following the process and criteria provided by the State Water Resources Control Board's Enforcement and Supplemental Environmental Project Policies. If accepted by the Lahontan Water Board, nearly half of the fine would fund the Mojave Water Agency's development of a salt and nutrient management plan for the Mojave groundwater basin. The plan would identify existing and future sources of salts and nutrients and management measures for protecting groundwater quality and beneficial uses.

The settlement is subject to a 30-day public review and comment period and must be approved by the Water Board before taking effect. Comments are due by September 5, 2012. The Water Board is tentatively scheduled to consider the settlement at its September 12-13, 2012 meeting in Barstow. Information on the proposed settlement can be found on the Water Board's web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>.



The Lahontan Water Board protects and restores water quality in California east of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada crests from the Oregon border through the Mojave Desert.