



Enforcement News

City of Salinas to pay over \$193,000 for 2022 untreated wastewater spill into Natividad Creek

Funds will be put toward projects that help prevent future spills

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MONTEREY COUNTY – The city of Salinas has agreed to pay over \$193,000 in connection with a spill of over 53,000 gallons of untreated domestic and municipal wastewater into Natividad Creek in April 2022 that impacted its water quality and harmed its fish population.

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on Thursday approved an [agreement](#) with the city that resulted from an enforcement action related to the spill, which began with an electronic failure at the Lake Street Pump Station. The failure caused an overflow of approximately 108,600 gallons from two manholes in the city of Salinas' sanitary sewer collection system. The city, in cooperation with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, responded immediately and conducted substantial cleanup and recovered a significant portion of the untreated wastewater. The remaining 53,000 gallons discharged to Natividad Creek.

“We take these incidents seriously because impacts to water quality in our creeks and rivers have negative effects on fish, wildlife and the people who rely on them,” said Central Coast Water Board Assistant Executive Officer Thea Tryon. “Whenever spills occur, they present an opportunity to work together to prevent them in the future. This agreement with the city includes two projects to prevent similar problems from occurring again and demonstrates our shared commitment to protecting and restoring our region’s waters.”

Under the agreement, the city of Salinas agreed to pay \$98,000 to the State Water Board’s Cleanup and Abatement Account and \$95,000 toward two projects to enhance the city’s ability to help prevent spills from the sanitary sewer collection system. As part of the settlement, the city agreed to upgrade the existing monitoring and control systems, improve alarm capabilities, and increase the reliability of the Lake Street Pump Station.



The city has also committed to installing new manhole covers with electronic sensors at 11 city-owned lift stations to measure real-time flow and levels of wastewater flowing through the sewer lines. The sensors in the manhole covers will send alarms to maintenance staff as an early warning if there are indicators that there may be a potential spill. Several of the new manhole cover monitoring systems are in a disadvantaged community.

Visit the [State Water Board Twitter page](#), @CaWaterBoards.

The [Central Coast Water Board](#) is responsible for protecting and restoring water quality in a 300-mile-long coastal region, from southern San Mateo and Santa Clara counties to the northern part of Ventura County. Protecting beneficial uses in streams, the ocean, and groundwater is essential to ensuring water quality and protecting the health of humans and wildlife.