

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
Thursday, August 17, 2017
Regional Water Board Office
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Public Hearing on Order No. R1-2017-0008 to consider adoption of proposed rescission of Cease and Desist Orders R1-2003-0046 and R1-2005-0034 for the City of Rio Dell Wastewater Treatment Facility, W DID No. 1B83134OHUM, NPDES No. CA0022748
(Cathleen Goodwin)

BOARD ACTION: The Board will consider adoption of Rescission Order No. R1-2017-0008.

BACKGROUND: The City of Rio Dell (Permittee) owns and operates a municipal wastewater treatment plant and associated wastewater collection and disposal facilities (Facility) for treating primarily domestic wastewater for a population of approximately 3,100 residential users in the community of Rio Dell. The Facility also serves several small commercial facilities.

The Facility is currently regulated under Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) Order No. R1-2011-0054, which serves as a NPDES permit for waste discharges to surface waters and waste discharge requirements for land disposal of disinfected secondary effluent. The Facility was previously regulated under WDR Orders R1-2000-15 and R1-2006-0021. During the terms of these Orders, the Permittee discharged to the Lower Eel River at Discharge Point 001 between October 1 and May 14 each year and to two percolation ponds constructed on a gravel bar of the Lower Eel River each year during the period of May 15 through September 30.

Previous studies demonstrated that the discharge to the percolation ponds is considered a discharge to waters of the U.S. (or an NPDES discharge) due to the hydrologic connection between the Eel River and the percolation ponds, and is thus in violation of the Basin Plan seasonal discharge prohibition. To abate discharges in violation of the Basin Plan seasonal discharge prohibition, the Permittee proposed to evaluate discharge alternatives and move the dry season discharge to a location that would not allow discharges to reach the Eel River during the seasonal discharge season. The Permittee ultimately elected to construct an irrigation system on agricultural property located 2.5 miles northwest of the Facility to land apply its effluent.

Cease and Desist Order (CDO) No. R1-2003-0046 required the Permittee to complete a series of short-term and long-term tasks to cease and desist from discharging and

threatening to discharge in violation of the terms of Order No. R1-2000-15 by May 15, 2007.

The Permittee complied with time schedules and tasks A through D of CDO No. R1-2003-0046. However, after selecting a preferred alternative, the Permittee determined that the preferred alternative would not meet Order No. R1-2000-15 criteria for compliance with the seasonal discharge prohibition. The Permittee thus requested a two-year extension of time to develop a new preferred disposal alternative. On June 21, 2005, the Regional Water Board adopted Order No. R1-2005-0034, providing the Permittee a two-year extension to May 15, 2009, to attain full compliance with WDRs by implementing long-term plans for treated effluent disposal during river discharge prohibition seasons.

During the term of Order No. R1-2005-0034, the Permittee submitted a plan to construct upgrades to the existing Facility, a new treated effluent pipeline, and a disposal system. Facility upgrades include a new headworks pumping system and a secondary treatment and solids stabilization system (Aero-Mod) that replaced the old Facility. Upgrades also include changes to the chlorination and effluent pumping systems; new biosolids processing equipment, and new laboratory and office facilities. The Permittee completed and began operating the Facility upgrades in February 2013 and the new disposal system in May 2014.

Completion of the Facility upgrades has resulted in a cessation of surface water discharges during the seasonal discharge prohibition season and the Permittee's compliance with WDRs and CDOs. The Permittee has continued to make improvements to the Facility performance during the term of WDR Order No. R1-2011-0054 and will continue to do so under the proposed NPDES permit, WDR Order No. R1-2017-0007(see agenda item 4). Regional Water Board staff concludes that the Permittee's completion of the Facility upgrades have resulted in correction of the violations that led to issuance of Cease and Desist Order Numbers R1-2003-0046 and R1-2005-0034. The proposed Order will rescind both CDOs.

Public Comment. No comments were received on Order No. R1-2017-0008. The Permittee verbally notified Regional Water Board staff that it supports the proposed Order.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Order No. R1-2017-0008, as proposed.

**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS:**

1. Proposed Order No. R1-2017-0008
2. Public Notice