



Enforcement News

City of Hollister Will Pay \$181,110 for Illegal Discharge Caused by Wastewater Collection System Failure

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Contact: John Robertson
John.Robertson@waterboards.ca.gov

HOLLISTER – The city of Hollister, which operates a municipal sewer system and industrial wastewater treatment plant, agreed to a \$181,110 settlement with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for the unauthorized release of approximately 38,500 gallons of tomato processing wastewater into the San Benito River.

Under the agreement, half of the funds will pay for construction of a project to permanently redirect stormwater and wastewater to the treatment plant for discharge to land.

The city for years has conveyed industrial canning waste from San Benito Foods to the plant through a combined collection system. City staff manually operates an inline switching valve – or “slide gate” – that directs wastewater to the treatment facility during canning season, and at all other times, uses that same conveyance system to discharge stormwater to the San Benito River. Once the new project is completed, both stormwater and any future canning waste spills will be directed to the plant for treatment.

“We work hard with local entities to prevent these types of spills,” said Dr. Jean-Pierre Wolff, chair of the Central Coast Water Board, “and we take these violations and threats to the environment very seriously. This settlement demonstrates our and the city’s commitment to protecting and restoring our region’s waters.”

The illegal discharges occurred in 2016, when a temporary plug installed at the slide gate failed after coming into contact with high-temperature tomato processing wastewater. The project will prevent similar environmental mishaps by ensuring that any future spills are driven away from the river, captured and treated before being released to land.

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





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For copies of the final signed order, contact Todd Stanley at Todd.Stanley@waterboards.ca.gov. Visit the [State Water Board Twitter page @CaWaterBoards](#).