



California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
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15 November 2011

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**NOTICE OF APPLICABILITY (NOA); LIMITED THREAT GENERAL WASTE
DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS ORDER NO. R5-2008-0082; CARSON HILL GOLD
MINE PROJECT, CALAVERAS COUNTY**

Our office received a Report of Waste Discharge application on 14 October 2011, from Carson Hill Mining Corporation for Sutton Enterprises (Dischargers), for the Carson Hill Gold Mine Project. Based on the application packet and subsequent information submitted by the Dischargers, we have determined that the project meets the required conditions for approval under the General Order for Limited Threat Discharges of Treated/Untreated Groundwater from Cleanup Sites, Wastewater from Superchlorination Projects, and Other Limited Threat Wastewaters to Surface Water (Limited Threat General Order). This project is hereby assigned Limited Threat General Order No. R5-2008-0082-023 and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CAG995002. Please reference the unique Order No. R5-2008-0082-023 in correspondence and documents.

The Limited Threat General Order (enclosed) may also be viewed at the following web address:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2008-0082.pdf. You are urged to familiarize yourself with the contents of the entire document. The Limited Threat General Order prescribes mandatory discharge monitoring requirements. The project activities shall be operated in accordance with the requirements contained in this NOA, the Limited Threat General Order, and with the information submitted by the Dischargers.

CALIFORNIA TOXIC RULE / STATE IMPLEMENTATION POLICY MONITORING

The Limited Threat General Order incorporates the requirements of the California Toxic Rule (CTR) and the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board), *Policy for Implementation of Toxic Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California*, 2005, also known as the State Implementation Policy (SIP).

California Environmental Protection Agency

Screening levels for CTR constituents are found in Attachments B of the Limited Threat General Order. Review of the submitted water quality data in comparison to the CTR screening values showed reasonable potential to impact the receiving water for antimony, cyanide, and mercury; therefore, final effluent limitations for these constituents are contained in the waste discharge requirements section of this NOA.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Carson Hill Gold Mine is located four miles southeast of the town of Angels Camp, in the central Sierra Nevada foothills in Calaveras County. The mine site includes a 64 acre open side cut, three former heap leach pads, four waste rock dumps, and a water supply pond known as the Stevenot Impoundment. In January 2007, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) issued Cleanup and Abatement Order R5-2007-0700, that directed the Dischargers to address the water quality impacts and develop a mine closure plan. To comply, the Dischargers constructed a water treatment plant, and began operation in February 2008. At that time, the treated groundwater discharge was covered under the Low Threat General Order No. 5-00-175, which has since expired.

The Dischargers propose to discharge treated groundwater from their water treatment plant at the mine into an unnamed tributary to Carson Creek that flows to the New Melones Reservoir.

The water treatment plant consists of one primary system with two supplemental systems that can be used as needed. The primary treatment system consists of reverse osmosis membranes that can be operated in series or parallel. The design flow rate is 0.12 million gallons per day, which consists of 0.09 million gallons per day of treated effluent and 0.03 million gallons per day of saline reject stream. The reject stream will not be discharged to the receiving water. The annual projected treated groundwater discharge is approximately 270 days.

The influent is from two primary sources. The first source is a natural spring where a drain collection system was installed in 2007; the second is from the leachate collection and recovery system underneath three waste management units (WMUs). The WMUs, designated WMU 1-3, are the locations where crushed ore was leached in heaps that were created during the open pit mining period from 1986 to 1989, under the ownership of the Carson Hill Gold Mining Corporation. The WMUs were closed in 1992 and currently contain a vegetated cover. The projected treated groundwater discharge is approximately three to sixteen million gallons per year.

WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS

The Discharger must comply with the following sections contained in the Limited Threat General Order that are applicable to this discharge:

- IV. Discharge Prohibitions (p. 13)
- V. Effluent Limitations Applicable to All Limited Threat Discharge

A.1. Priority Pollutants

Parameter	Units	Effluent Limitations	
		Average Monthly	Maximum Daily
Antimony	µg/L	6	12
Cyanide	µg/L	4.3	8.5
Mercury	µg/L	0.05	0.10

A.2. Acute Whole Effluent Toxicity (p. 16)

VI. Receiving Water Limitations

A. Surface Water Limitations (pp. 19-22), and

VII. Provisions (pp. 23-30)

In addition, the Discharger must comply with Attachment D-Standard Provisions of the Limited Threat General Order.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Discharger must notify Central Valley Water Board staff: 1) 24 hours before the start of each new discharge, 2) as soon as noncompliance is anticipated, and 3) when the discharge ceases.

The Discharger must comply with the following sections contained in Attachment E, Monitoring and Reporting Program of the Limited Threat General Order;

- I. General Monitoring Provisions
- II. Monitoring Locations
- IV. Effluent Monitoring Requirements
 - A.2. Monitoring Location EFF-001

Parameter	Units	Sample Type	Monitoring Frequency	Required Analytical Test Method
Total Flow	gpd	Estimate	1/Day ¹	²
Electrical Conductivity @ 25 C°	µmhos/cm	Grab	1/Month	²
pH	standard units	Grab	1/Day ¹	²
Whole Effluent Toxicity (See Section V)				
Hardness, Total (as CaCO ₃)	mg/L	Grab	1/Month	^{2,3}
Antimony	µg/L	Grab	1/Month	²
Cyanide	µg/L	Grab	1/Month	²
Mercury	µg/L	Grab	1/Month	²

¹ When discharging to the surface water.

² Pollutants shall be analyzed using the analytical methods described in 40 CFR Part 136.

³ Monitoring shall be performed concurrently with effluent sampling for Antimony, Cyanide and Mercury.

- V. Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing Requirements,
- VIII. Receiving Water Monitoring Requirements- Surface Water

- B.2 Monitoring Location RSW-002

- In conducting the receiving water sampling, a log shall be kept of the receiving water conditions throughout the reach bounded by RSW-001 and RSW-002. Attention shall be given to the presence or absence of:

- a. Floating or suspended matter
 - b. Discoloration
 - c. Bottom deposits
 - d. Aquatic life
 - e. Visible films, sheens, or coatings
 - f. Fungi, slimes, or objectionable growths
 - g. Potential nuisance conditions

- X. Reporting Requirements

GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

The required annual fee (as specified in the annual billing you will receive from the State Water Resources Control Board) shall be submitted until the discharge is terminated. To terminate coverage under the Limited Threat General Order, the Dischargers must submit written notification to the Central Valley Water Board that the discharge regulated by this Limited Threat General Order has ceased and is no longer necessary. If a timely written request is not received, then the Dischargers will be required to pay additional annual fees as determined by the State Water Resources Control Board.

ENFORCEMENT

Failure to comply with the Limited Threat General Order may result in enforcement actions, which could include civil liability. Effluent limitation violations are subject to a Mandatory Minimum Penalty (MMP) of \$3,000 per violation. Late reports may be subject to an MMP of \$3,000 for each period of 30 days late. When discharges do not occur during a quarterly monitoring period, the Dischargers must still submit a quarterly report indicating that no discharge occurred to avoid being subject to enforcement actions.

COMMUNICATION

All monitoring report submittals, notification of the beginning and end of discharge, and questions regarding compliance and enforcement shall be directed to Lucio Orellana of the Central Valley Water Board's NPDES Compliance and Enforcement Unit. Mr. Orellana can be reached at (916) 464-4681 or lorellana@waterboards.ca.gov.

Questions regarding the permitting aspects of this Limited Threat General Order, and written notification for termination of coverage under this Order, shall be directed to Mike Negrete of the Central Valley Water Board's NPDES Permitting Unit. Mr. Negrete can be reached at (916) 464-4662 or mnegrete@waterboards.ca.gov.

Original Signed by Kenneth D. Landau
Pamela C. Creedon
Executive Officer

Brad Sutton, Owner of Sutton Enterprises 5
Anthony Baus, Project Manager
Carson Hill Gold Mine

15 November 2011

Enclosure: General Order No. R5-2008-0082 (Dischargers only)

cc: Dave Smith, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, San Francisco
 Phil Isorena, Division of Water Quality, State Water Board, Sacramento