



CVCWA

Central Valley Clean Water Association

Representing Over Fifty Wastewater Agencies

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February 2, 2015

Via Electronic Mail Only

Mr. Jeff Pyle
Regional Water Quality Control Board,
Central Valley Region
1685 E Street
Fresno, CA 93706
jpyle@waterboards.ca.gov

RE: Comments on the Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2015-XXXX for
Delhi County Water District Wastewater Treatment Facility, Merced County

Dear Mr. Pyle:

The Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the tentative Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2015-XXXX for Delhi County Water District Wastewater Treatment Facility (Tentative Order). CVCWA is a non-profit association of public agencies located within the Central Valley region that provide wastewater collection, treatment, and water recycling services to millions of Central Valley residents and businesses. We approach these matters with the perspective of balancing environmental and economic interests consistent with state and federal law. In this letter, we provide the following comments regarding the applicable groundwater objectives, compliance schedule provisions for nitrate and request revisions as indicated herein.

I. Groundwater Objectives

The Tentative Order is not clear as to which salinity-related water quality objectives are being applied as groundwater limitations to groundwater in this area. The Tentative Order

imposes the following groundwater limitation: "Release of waste constituent from any treatment, reclamation or storage component associated with discharge shall not cause or contribute to groundwater . . . [c]ontaining constituent concentrations in excess of the concentrations specified below or natural background water quality, whichever is greater: . . . For constituents identified in Title 22, the MCLs quantified therein."¹ For total dissolved solids (TDS), the recommended Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) is 500 milligrams per liter (mg/L), and the upper level is 1000 mg/L. For electrical conductivity (EC), the recommended Secondary MCL is 900 micromhos per centimeter (umhos/cm), and the upper level is 1,600 umhos/cm.

As the Tentative Order acknowledges, salinity in the effluent has decreased and so have salinity levels in groundwater in the vicinity of the Delhi County Water District Wastewater Treatment Facility (Water District). However, there are still a few wells where the groundwater does not meet potentially applicable water quality objectives for salinity constituents. If the recommended Secondary MCL of 500 mg/L of TDS is considered to be the applicable objective, then the Water District could potentially violate the groundwater limitation even though TDS in the Water District's effluent is actually improving groundwater quality. The same rationale pertains to EC as well.

Considering that the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) acknowledges that the Water District's effluent is not the cause of degradation, CVCWA respectfully recommends that the Regional Board revise the language for the groundwater limitations and state that for TDS and EC, the upper Secondary MCLs of 1,000 mg/L and 1,600 umhos/cm respectively are considered the applicable objectives.

II. Effluent Limitation C.2, Discharge Specification D.2 and Groundwater Limitation E.1(i)

CVCWA appreciates the Regional Board's intent to include a compliance schedule with Effluent Limitation C.2 and Discharge Specification D.2. However, as included in the Tentative Order, and with respect to the reference to Tentative Order Provision G.6, the proposed language does not clearly indicate that the Water District is not required to immediately comply with Effluent Limitation C.2 and Discharge Specification D.2. Further, the Tentative Order provides the Water District with no protection from compliance with Groundwater Limitation E.1(i).

To ensure that there is a clear linkage between Effluent Limitation C.2 and Discharge Specification D.2, and the compliance schedule provisions in G.6, CVCWA recommends that the following language be added to Effluent Limitation C.2 and Discharge Specification D.2:

¹ Tentative Order, p. 16.

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If the effluent does not meet this limitation, the Water District is considered to be in compliance with this Order provided that the Water District is in compliance with Provision G.6 of this Order.

Further, with respect to Groundwater Limitation E.1(i), CVCWA recommends that the following language be added to this limit:

If the release of waste constituents from any treatment, reclamation or storage component associated with the discharge causes or contributes to groundwater exceeding this limit, the Water District is considered to be in compliance with this Order provided that the Water District is in compliance with Provision G.6 of this Order.

Similar to our comments above, Provision G.6 as proposed does not clearly create a compliance schedule that protects the Water District. To provide clarity, and to ensure that the Water District is properly protected, CVCWA recommends the opening sentence to Provision G.6 be revised as follows:

"To allow the Discharger sufficient time to achieve compliance with Effluent Limitation C.2, Discharge Specification D.2 and Groundwater Limitation E.1(i), the Discharger shall, in accordance with comply with the following compliance schedule, comply with Effluent Limitation B.3."

We appreciate your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions or if CVCWA can be of further assistance, please contact me at (530) 268-1338 or eofficer@cvcwa.org.

Sincerely,



Debbie Webster,
Executive Officer

cc (via email): Pamela Creedon, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
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