



Enforcement News

City of Greenfield to pay for unauthorized discharges of wastewater to groundwater

City agrees to pay \$172,115 penalty

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MONTEREY COUNTY – The City of Greenfield has agreed to a \$172,115 [settlement](#) with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for the unauthorized discharge of three million gallons of wastewater to groundwater outside of a permitted disposal area.

On May 8, 2018, treated municipal wastewater broke through a levee that separates a wastewater treatment plant disposal area from the western bank of the Salinas River. The wastewater flowed to dry areas next to the Salinas River where it seeped into the ground and underlying groundwater.

“We are working with the City to address the underlying problems that led to this incident,” said Matthew Keeling, Central Coast Water Board Executive Officer. “Our goal is to protect the waters of the central coast by not only holding dischargers accountable, but by also helping them prevent similar problems in the future.”

The break in the levee occurred because the City of Greenfield had not properly maintained their wastewater treatment plant disposal areas. The City of Greenfield overfilled treatment and disposal ponds and flooded spray irrigation areas, causing the break in the levee. Sampling data established that the discharge contained several pollutants that exceeded water quality objectives established in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin. The Water Quality Control Plan establishes water quality objectives for the protection of beneficial uses of groundwater and exceeding those objectives is an indicator of potential or actual harm to beneficial uses.





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.