

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401**

DRAFT TIME SCHEDULE ORDER R3-2026-0029

August xx, 2026

**REQUIRING THE
LOS ALAMOS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
TO COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS PRESCRIBED
IN GENERAL WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS ORDER R3-2020-0020 FOR
DISCHARGES FROM DOMESTIC WASTEWATER SYSTEMS WITH FLOWS
GREATER THAN 100,000 GALLONS PER DAY**

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Central Coast Water Board) finds that:

BACKGROUND

1. The Los Alamos Community Services District (Los Alamos CSD) owns and operates a domestic wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) located at 8690 Bell Street, Los Alamos in Santa Barbara County.
2. The WWTP has a permitted maximum daily flow of 200,000 gallons per day (gpd) and had an annual average influent flow of approximately 123,000 gpd in 2024 and 128,000 gpd in 2025. Treatment and disposal consist of a comminutor with a bypass mechanical screening followed by two mechanically aerated facultative treatment ponds operated in series, and land disposal via spray irrigation to 47.6 acres and percolation via 64.4 acre-feet of percolation basins. Los Alamos CSD's WWTP employs treatment equivalent to secondary treatment (40 CFR §133.105).
3. On August 24, 2022, the Central Coast Water Board enrolled Los Alamos CSD into *General Waste Discharge Requirements Order R3-2020-0020 for Discharges from Domestic Wastewater Systems with Flows Greater than 100,000 Gallons per Day* (General Permit)¹ and on December 13, 2022, the Central Coast Water Board revised Los Alamos CSD's enrollment in the General Permit. The General Permit regulates the discharge of secondary treated effluent from the WWTP to land, and the

¹ A direct link to the General Permit is available here:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2020/r32020_0020.pdf
The General Permit enrollment letter and all recent reports and correspondence are available on GeoTracker under the "Site Maps/Documents" tab linked here:
https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=WDR100029526

December 13, 2022 notice of applicability (Notice of Applicability)² includes facility-specific information and requirements. The Notice of Applicability includes interim effluent limitations for five-day biochemical oxygen demand (BOD₅), total suspended solids (TSS), settleable solids, total dissolved solids, sodium, chloride, and pH for the first 24 months of enrollment (until August 24, 2024) pursuant to Part V.A (Effluent Limitations) of the General Permit. The General Permit and the Notice of Applicability require Los Alamos CSD to comply with the most recently issued monitoring and reporting program.

4. The General Permit includes facility-specific effluent limitations based on treatment technology and the water quality objectives for the underlying groundwater established in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coast Basin (Basin Plan). The WWTP overlies the San Antonio Creek Valley groundwater basin.
5. Pursuant to General Permit Part V.A (Effluent Limitations), the General Permit allows the discharger to choose the point of compliance for total nitrogen in either groundwater or effluent. In the August 1, 2025 Time Schedule Compliance Plan³ submitted by the Los Alamos CSD, the Los Alamos CSD stated the point of compliance will be the treated effluent. Through effluent monitoring, Los Alamos CSD must demonstrate compliance with the total nitrogen limitation of 10 mg/L (as a 25-month rolling median) that went into effect on August 24, 2024 as identified in Table 6 of the General Permit for the San Antonio Creek Valley basin.
6. The General Permit establishes BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen effluent limitations as shown in Table 1. Pursuant to the Notice of Applicability, the effluent limitations went into effect on August 24, 2024, two years from the date the initial notice of applicability was issued to Los Alamos CSD. Therefore, as of August 24, 2024, Los Alamos CSD must comply with these effluent limits at the monitoring locations specified in Monitoring and Reporting Program R3-2022-0049.

Table 1. Effluent Limitations

Constituent	Units	Limit	Limit
BOD ₅	mg/L	45 (30-Day Average)	65 (7-Day Average)
TSS	mg/L	45 (30-Day Average)	65 (7-Day Average)
Total Nitrogen	mg/L	10 (25-Month Rolling Median)	Not applicable

mg/L = milligrams per liter

NEED FOR TIME SCHEDULE ORDER

7. As demonstrated by data Los Alamos CSD reported in its August 1, 2025 Time Schedule Compliance Plan and presented in Table 2, WWTP effluent concentrations of BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen exceed the General Permit effluent limitations. Los Alamos CSD’s WWTP fails to treat wastewater so that it does not pose a threat to

² Los Alamos CSD Notice of Applicability R3-2020-0020
https://documents.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable_documents/2255155265/Revised_Los%20Alamos%20NOA%20MRP%20Final.pdf

³ Los Alamos CSD 2025 Time Schedule Compliance Plan
<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=u1muk>

groundwater; therefore, a discharge of waste is taking place that violates or threatens to violate requirements prescribed by the Central Coast Water Board.

Table 2. Minimum and Maximum Range and Average BOD₅, TSS, and Total Nitrogen Effluent Concentrations Reported from 2023 to 2025 ⁽¹⁾

Constituent	2023	2024	2025	Limitation ⁽²⁾
	Range / Average mg/L	Range / Average mg/L	Range / Average mg/L	
BOD ₅	36-69 / 57	28-72 / 54	57-137 / 101	45 ⁽³⁾
TSS	63-164 / 105	33-78 / 62	52-101 / 77	45 ⁽³⁾
Total Nitrogen	52-56 / 54	59-64 / 61	42-68 / 60	10 ⁽⁴⁾

Table Notes:

- (1) Values obtained from self-reported quarterly and annual monitoring reports from 2023-2025.
- (2) Effluent limitations went into effect on August 24, 2024.
- (3) 30-day average.
- (4) Groundwater 25-month rolling median.

8. Los Alamos CSD’s WWTP is an aerated facultative pond treatment system, which was originally built in 1988. Two disposal capacity expansions occurred in 1993 and in 2006 to accommodate population growth. Treatment capacity has not been updated since the 1980s and was never designed to remove nitrogen from wastewater. The General Permit prohibits a wastewater discharge from causing underlying groundwater to exceed Basin Plan water quality objectives. There is no existing groundwater quality data from surrounding groundwater monitoring wells. Los Alamos CSD must improve treatment to comply with the nitrogen limitations in either effluent or groundwater. Pursuant to the General Permit, Los Alamos CSD can propose the compliance point in effluent, instead of groundwater, if it can achieve the 10 mg/L of total nitrogen limitation in effluent as required by the General Permit Table 6. At a March 27, 2024 Los Alamos CSD meeting, the board members decided to move forward with a WWTP process improvement for compliance at the point of discharge, as opposed to groundwater monitoring.

9. To comply with its effluent limitations for BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen, Los Alamos CSD has proposed upgrading the WWTP to comply with the General Permit. Los Alamos CSD investigated options for optimizing the existing aerated facultative pond treatment system to improve WWTP performance. Los Alamos CSD has proposed short-term treatment solutions to improve water quality such as the installation of an auger screen at the headworks to remove incoming solids and solids removal from the aerated facultative ponds. However, to meet effluent limits, Los Alamos CSD has determined an upgraded WWTP is required. This time schedule order requires Los Alamos CSD to implement actions to achieve compliance with the General Permit BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen limitations.

10. On September 29, 2025, the Los Alamos CSD followed the Proposition 218 process, and the board of directors approved a series of five annual fee increases to occur between 2025-2029 as a first step to start building funds to cover the cost

(approximately \$800,000) for wastewater capital projects to repair and replace aging infrastructure.

11. Los Alamos CSD submitted a *Time Schedule Compliance Plan* to the Central Coast Water Board on August 1, 2025.⁴ The time schedule compliance plan presents water quality data, a detailed description and chronology of the efforts to improve treatment and disposal, justification for the need for additional time to comply with effluent and groundwater limitations, and a time schedule and justification of specific actions Los Alamos CSD will take to achieve compliance as soon as feasible. Los Alamos CSD has proposed constructing a modular/package membrane bioreactor (MBR) wastewater treatment system.
12. The community of Los Alamos is classified as a small severely disadvantaged community. This finding is based on population, the census tract's annual median household income as defined by California Water Code section 79505.5, and as reported by the Census American Community Survey 2016-2020 dataset.
13. Los Alamos CSD currently does not have the funds to construct the proposed MBR wastewater treatment system and has requested additional time to comply with the General Permit that allows them time secure funding. On November 27, 2024, Los Alamos CSD applied for grant funding to the State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Financial Assistance. As of June 25, 2026, the Division of Financial Assistance has been reviewing the Los Alamos CSD's application for completeness.
14. This time schedule order establishes a final compliance date of June 4, 2030, which will provide Los Alamos CSD with the time needed to plan, design, complete financing, building, and implementing actions to reduce BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen wastewater effluent concentrations.
15. This time schedule order includes performance-based BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen interim effluent limits that are effective upon issuance of the time schedule order. The interim effluent limits were established through the Central Coast Water Board's evaluation of TSS, BOD₅, and total nitrogen effluent concentrations. The interim 30-day average limit is established based on the highest monthly average concentration from January 2023 through December 2025 from treated wastewater samples collected just prior to land application or discharge into a percolation basin. This sample location is designated as sample ID ES-1 and is presented in the August 24, 2022 monitoring and reporting program R3-2022-0049. The sample maximum interim effluent limit is based on the highest concentration in all samples collected at ES-1 from January 2023 through December 2025. Data-based interim effluent limits are established that represent typical existing effluent quality, ensuring effluent water quality is not further degraded over time, and gives Los Alamos CSD time to implement actions to achieve compliance with the General Permit.

⁴ The documents and all reports are available on the GeoTracker website under the "Site Maps / Documents" tab: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=WDR100030112

16. This time schedule order establishes interim effluent limitations because compliance with the final effluent limitations in the General Permit cannot be achieved by the wastewater treatment plant at this time.

REGULATORY BASIS

17. California Water Code section 13300 states:

Whenever a regional board finds that a discharge of waste is taking place or threatening to take place that violates or will violate requirements prescribed by the regional board, or the state board, or that the waste collection, treatment, or disposal facilities of a discharger are approaching capacity, the board may require the discharger to submit for approval of the board, with such modifications as it may deem necessary, a detailed time schedule of specific actions the discharger shall take in order to correct or prevent a violation of requirements.

18. Chapter 3, Section 3.3 of the Basin Plan states:

Controllable water quality shall conform to the water quality objectives contained herein. When other conditions cause degradation of water quality beyond the levels or limits established as water quality objectives, controllable conditions shall not cause further degradation of water quality.

Controllable water quality conditions are those actions or circumstances resulting from man's activities that may influence the quality of the waters of the State and that may be reasonably controlled.

Water quality objectives are considered to be necessary to protect those present and probable future beneficial uses enumerated in Chapter Two of this plan and to protect existing high-quality waters of the State. These objectives will be achieved primarily through the establishment of waste discharge requirements and through implementation of this water quality control plan.

In setting waste discharge requirements, the Regional Board will consider the potential impact on beneficial uses within the area of influence of the discharge, the existing quality of receiving waters, and the appropriate water quality objectives. The Central Coast Water Board will make a finding of beneficial uses to be protected and establish waste discharge requirements to protect those uses and to meet water quality objectives.

19. Pursuant to California Water Code section 13167.5, the Central Coast Water Board must provide notice and a period of at least 30 days for public comment prior to the adoption of a time schedule order adopted pursuant to section 13300 that sets forth a schedule of compliance and required actions relating to waste discharge requirements prescribed pursuant to section 13263. The Central Coast Water Board provided notice and a 30-day public comment period from June 30, 2026 to July 30, 2026.

20. The Central Coast Water Board has notified Los Alamos CSD and interested agencies and persons of its intent to issue the time schedule order concerning violations or threatened violations of waste discharge requirements.
21. The proposed WWTP improvements qualify for a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Class 1 Exemption pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(b). The Los Alamos CSD WWTP improvement project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the "Class 1" (14 CCR § 15301(b)) exemption per the State CEQA Guidelines because it involves the minor alteration of existing facilities of investor and/or publicly-owned utilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.
22. This enforcement action is taken for the protection of the environment and as such is exempt from the provisions of CEQA Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq. in accordance with section 15321, chapter 3, title 14, of the California Code of Regulations.

ORDERING

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, pursuant to California Water Code sections 13300 and 13267 and to ensure compliance with the requirements of Waste Discharge Requirements Order R3-2020-0020:

1. Los Alamos CSD must comply with the interim BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen effluent limits in Table 3, effective upon issuance of this time schedule order. The interim BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen limits are effective until all the tasks below are complete or by June 4, 2030, whichever comes first.

Table 3. Interim Effluent Limitations

Constituent	Units	30-Day Average	Sample Maximum
BOD ₅	mg/L	101	137
TSS	mg/L	105	164
Total Nitrogen	mg/L	61	68

2. Los Alamos CSD must complete the following tasks on or before the specified dates:

Table 4. Task Summary

Task No.	Task	Due Date
1	<u>Project Funding Acquisition</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) application estimated to be August 1, 2026 • Complete USDA WWDGLP Funding Application (if required) June 22, 2026 • Complete Funding Agreement with CWSRF 	September 20, 2027

Task No.	Task	Due Date
2	<u>Design Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete 60% Design of WWTP Improvements November 9, 2027</i> • <i>Complete 90% Design of WWTP Improvements February 22, 2028</i> • <i>Complete Final Design and Bid Documents of WWTP Improvements.</i> 	May 31, 2028
3	<u>Project Bidding/Award</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bid Period 6-weeks</i> • <i>Award Contract</i> 	August 2, 2028
4	<u>Begin Construction</u>	September 28, 2028
5	<u>Obtain Permits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Updated Water Board Permit</i> • <i>Update Sanitary Sewer Management Plan</i> • <i>Update Emergency Response Plan</i> • <i>Generator Permit to Construct/Operate</i> • <i>County Grading Permit</i> • <i>CEQA Exemption with Justification Memo</i> 	June 4, 2030
6	<u>Project Construction and WWTP Startup Complete</u>	June 4, 2030

3. In addition to the reports required by the current monitoring and reporting program, semiannual status reports must be submitted on August 1 and February 1 of each year, documenting status and progress from January through June for semiannual report due August 1 and July through December for semiannual report due February 1. Los Alamos CSD must submit semiannual status reports beginning February 1, 2027, and every six months thereafter until this time schedule order is confirmed to be complete by the Central Coast Water Board Executive Officer. At a minimum, the reports must include:

- i. A summary of progress or delays during the previous six months (significant activities);
- ii. Significant findings and associated actions;
- iii. Activities scheduled for the next six months; and
- iv. Summary of the BOD₅, TSS, and total nitrogen influent and effluent data from samples obtained within the previous six months. Also include a graph of concentration over time, discussion of trends, and comparison of data to interim effluent limitations. Los Alamos CSD must continue to collect data at the frequency and location included in the existing monitoring and reporting program but provide a more detailed evaluation of the data in these semiannual status reports. Monitoring data will be

used to determine compliance with interim effluent limitations set forth herein.

4. All technical reports and workplans that interpret percolation capacity, source water characteristics, treatment system studies, and groundwater data must be prepared and stamped by a California licensed civil engineer or professional geologist.
5. All reports required by this time schedule order must be provided electronically in searchable PDF and signed by either a principal executive officer or ranking elected official, or by a duly authorized representative of that person⁵. All reports must be submitted with a signed and certified cover letter and uploaded to GeoTracker Global ID WDR100030112.
6. Any person signing a report required by this time schedule order must make the following certification:

“I certify under penalty of perjury that this document and all attachments were prepared by me, or under my direction or supervision, following a system designed to ensure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this document and all attachments are true, accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment.”
7. If Los Alamos CSD is unable to perform any activity or submit any documentation in compliance with the deadlines set forth in Table 4 Task Summary, Los Alamos CSD may request, in writing, an extension of the time for Executive Officer review and approval. The extension request must include justification for the delay and must be submitted at least thirty days prior to the respective deadline to be considered complete and timely. The Executive Officer may approve an extension in writing to Los Alamos CSD.
8. During the effective period of this time schedule order, Los Alamos CSD must comply with all provisions of the General Permit and Notice of Applicability that are not in conflict with this time schedule order.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

If, in the opinion of the Executive Officer, Los Alamos CSD fails to comply with any provisions of this time schedule order or fails to consistently demonstrate substantive progress towards achieving full compliance with limitations in the General Permit, the Executive Officer may terminate this time schedule order. Los Alamos CSD may also be subject to issuance of a cease and desist order in accordance with California Water Code section 13301. The Central Coast Water Board reserves its right to take any enforcement action authorized by law.

The Central Coast Water Board's requirement that Los Alamos CSD submit semi-annual reports is made pursuant to section 13267 of the California Water Code.

⁵ To designate an authorized representative, complete this form linked here and submit to the Central Coast Water Board.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/wastewater_permitting/docs/authorized-representative-form.pdf

The cost of preparing each semi-annual report is estimated to be less than \$1,200 (hourly rate of \$150 and 8 hours of work). The reports, which will summarize water quality data and the status of tasks upgrading the WWTP and improving effluent water quality will provide Central Coast Water Board with information to evaluate time schedule order and General Permit compliance. This information and compliance with the time schedule order and the General Permit will, in turn, ensure protection of groundwater quality and human health. Thus, the burden, including costs, of the semi-annual reports bears a reasonable relationship to its need and the benefits to be obtained. More detailed information is available in the Central Coast Water Board's public file on this matter.

Los Alamos CSD is required to submit this information as the owner and operator of the wastewater treatment plant. The evidence supporting this requirement is described herein and on GeoTracker.

Pursuant to section 13268 of the California Water Code, a violation of a California Water Code section 13267 requirement may subject Los Alamos CSD to civil liability of up to \$1,000 per day for each day in which the violation occurs.

Pursuant to California Water Code section 13320, any aggrieved person may seek review of this time schedule order by filing a petition with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) for review in accordance with California Water Code section 13320, and California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 2050 et seq. The State Water Board must receive the petition by 5 pm on 30th day after the date of this time schedule order, except that if the 30th day following the date of this time schedule order falls on a Saturday, Sunday or state holiday, the petition must be received by the State Water Board by 5 pm on the next business day. Copies of the law and regulations applicable to filing petitions are available online at the address below or will be provided upon request.

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/public_notices/petitions/water_quality

This time schedule order will take effect on the date it is signed by the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer may modify the time schedule in this order to permit a specified task or tasks to be completed at later dates if Los Alamos CSD demonstrates and the Executive Officer determines that the delay was beyond the reasonable control of Los Alamos CSD.

Ordered By:

Ryan E. Lodge
Executive Officer

WDR Program

ECM Subject Name = Los Alamos CSD Time Schedule Order No. R3-2026-0029

ECM/CIWQS Place ID = CW-237395

GeoTracker No. = WDR100030112

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