
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

13 May 2025

Ron Tobey
Chief Plant Operator
City of Mountain House
P.O. Box 1885
Byron CA 94505

via email:
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OFFER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXPEDITED PAYMENT LETTER PROGRAM RELATING TO ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY R5-2025-0517 FOR ASSESSMENT OF MANDATORY MINIMUM PENALTIES, CITY OF MOUNTAIN HOUSE, MOUNTAIN HOUSE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

The City of Mountain House (Discharger) discharges treated wastewater from the Mountain House Wastewater Treatment Plant (Facility), which was regulated under Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order R5-2017-0119 (NPDES CA0084271) until 31 July 2023. WDRs R5-2023-0033 were adopted on 22 June 2023 and became effective on 1 August 2023. This Offer to Participate in the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Central Valley Water Board's) Expedited Payment Letter (EPL) Program (Conditional Offer) provides the Discharger with an opportunity to resolve mandatory minimum penalties (MMPs) for alleged NPDES permit violations without a formal administrative civil liability complaint. The alleged mandatory minimum penalty, in the amount of forty-two thousand dollars (\$42,000), represents the sum of accrued mandatory minimum penalties for effluent limitation violations specifically identified in the Record of Violations (Attachment A), attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, that occurred between 01 March 2022 and 30 November 2024.

NOTICE OF VIOLATION AND RECORD OF VIOLATIONS

Based on the Discharger's self-monitoring reports, the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team sent the Discharger a Notice of Violation and Record of Violations (ROV) on 17 March 2025, notifying the Discharger of effluent limit violations, reporting violations, and corresponding violations of the California Water Code. The Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team provided the Discharger with an opportunity to review and contest the violations listed in the ROV. The Discharger responded to the ROV on 11 April 2025 and contested several pH violations that occurred during the Facility's conversion from a sequencing batch reactor (SBR) treatment system to a membrane reactor (MBR) treatment system. The Discharger had previously received a

NICHOLAS AVDIS, CHAIR | PATRICK PULUPA, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

90-day protection from MMPs during commissioning of the new treatment system in a letter from the Central Valley Water Board dated 16 January 2024. Central Valley Water Board staff reviewed the Discharger's ROV response and determined that six (6) pH violations assessed in the ROV are exempt from MMPs due to the MMP protection that was in place. This resulted in the reduction of the penalty amount of sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) assessed in the ROV to forty-two thousand dollars (\$42,000) shown in Attachment A and throughout this EPL.

STATUTORY LIABILITY

Water Code sections 13385(h) and (i) require the assessment of a mandatory minimum penalty of \$3,000 for each specified serious and chronic effluent limit violation. Pursuant to Water Code section 13385.1(a), the failure to file a discharge monitoring report required pursuant to section 13383 for each complete period of thirty (30) days following the deadline for submitting the report constitutes a serious violation subject to a mandatory minimum penalty under Water Code section 13385(h). The Discharger may also be subject to discretionary administrative civil liabilities pursuant to Water Code section 13385(c) of up to \$10,000 for each day in which the violation occurs, and \$10 for each gallon discharged but not cleaned up in excess of 1,000 gallons. These mandatory minimum penalties and discretionary administrative civil liabilities may be assessed by the Central Valley Water Board beginning with the date that the violations first occurred. The formal enforcement action that the Central Valley Water Board uses to assess such liability is an administrative civil liability complaint, although the Central Valley Water Board may instead refer such matters to the Attorney General's Office for prosecution. If referred to the Attorney General for prosecution, the Superior Court may assess up to \$25,000 for each day in which the violation occurs, and \$25 for each gallon discharged but not cleaned up in excess of 1,000 gallons.

SETTLEMENT OFFER

The Discharger can avoid the issuance of a formal enforcement action and settle the alleged violations identified in Attachment A by participating in the EPL Program.

To promote resolution of these violations, the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team makes this Conditional Offer. The Central Valley Water Board's Prosecution Team proposes to resolve these violations without the issuance of a formal enforcement action through this Conditional Offer assessing **forty-two thousand dollars** (\$42,000) in mandatory minimum penalties. If the Discharger accepts this proposal, subject to the conditions below, the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team will accept that payment in settlement of any enforcement action that would otherwise arise out of the violations identified in Attachment A. Accordingly, the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team will forego issuance of a formal administrative civil liability complaint, will not refer the violations to the Attorney General, and will waive its right to seek additional discretionary civil liabilities for the violations identified in Attachment A. The Conditional Offer does not address or resolve

liability for any violation that is not specifically identified in Attachment A, regardless of the date that the violation occurred.

If the Discharger accepts this Conditional Offer, please complete and return the enclosed "Acceptance of Conditional Resolution and Waiver of Right to Hearing" (proposed) Order" (Acceptance and Waiver) on or before 13 June 2025. The Acceptance and Waiver constitutes a settlement of the violations specifically identified in Attachment A.

CONDITIONS FOR CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTION

Federal regulations require the Central Valley Water Board to publish and allow the public thirty (30) days to comment on any settlement of an enforcement action addressing NPDES permit violations (40 C.F.R. section 123.27(d)(2)(iii)). Notice of this settlement will be published on the Central Valley Water Board's website at:

[Central Valley Tentative Orders](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/tentative_orders/)

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/tentative_orders/)

If no comments are received within the 30-day comment period, and unless there are new material facts that become available to the Central Valley Water Board, the Executive Officer or his designee will execute the Acceptance and Waiver as a stipulated order assessing the uncontested mandatory minimum penalty amount pursuant to Water Code sections 13385.

However, if significant comments are received in opposition to the settlement, this Conditional Offer may be withdrawn. In that case, the Discharger's waiver pursuant to the Acceptance and Waiver will be void and the violation(s) will be addressed in an administrative civil liability hearing. At the hearing, the Discharger will be free to make arguments to any of the alleged violations, and the Discharger's prior agreement to accept this Conditional Offer will be treated as a settlement communication and will not in any way be binding or used as evidence against the Discharger. The Discharger will be provided with further information on the administrative civil liability hearing process.

If the Discharger chooses to sign the Acceptance and Waiver, full payment of the assessed amount may be submitted with the waiver. However, full payment of the assessed amount shall be due no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the date the Acceptance and Waiver is executed by the Executive Officer. In accordance with California Water Code section 13385(n)(1) and California Water Code section 13385.1(c)(1), funds collected for violations of effluent limitations and reporting requirements pursuant to section 13385 and 13385.1 shall be deposited in the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account. Accordingly, the \$42,000 liability shall be paid by cashiers or certified check made out to the "State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account". Failure to pay the full penalty within the required time period may subject the Discharger to further liability.

The Discharger shall indicate on the check the number of this EPL and send it to the State Water Resources Control Board, Accounting Office, Attn: EPL R5-2025-0517 Payment, PO Box 1888, Sacramento, California, 95812-1888. The waiver and a copy of the check must also be mailed to the Central Valley Water Board at 11020 Sun Center Drive #200, Rancho Cordova, CA, 95670 attention to Xuan Luo. If you have any questions or comments regarding this Settlement Offer, please contact Xuan Luo at (916) 464-4606 or Xuan.Luo@waterboards.ca.gov.

Original Digitally Signed by John J. Baum

JOHN J. BAUM
Assistant Executive Officer

Enclosures (2): Attachment A Record of Violations
Acceptance of Conditional Resolution and Waiver of Right to Hearing

cc via email: Elizabeth Aubuchon, USEPA, Region 9, San Francisco
David Boyers, Office of Enforcement, SWRCB, Sacramento
Patrick Pulupa, Central Valley Water Board Advisory Team, Rancho Cordova
Jessica Jahr, Office of Chief Counsel, SWRCB, Sacramento
Adam Laputz, Central Valley Water Board Advisory Team, Rancho Cordova

ATTACHMENT A TO SETTLEMENT OFFER NUMBER R5-2025-0517**Record of Violations Subject to Mandatory Minimum Penalties****CITY OF MOUNTAIN HOUSE
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT****RECORD OF VIOLATIONS (01 MARCH 2022 – 30 NOVEMBER 2024) MANDATORY PENALTIES**

(Data reported under Monitoring and Reporting Programs (R5-2017-0119 and R5-2023-0033))

The following table lists the alleged violations subject to mandatory minimum penalties (MMPs), pursuant to Water Code section 13385(h) and (i).

Table A. Violations Subject to Mandatory Penalties

#	Violation Date	Parameter	Units	Limit	Measured	Period	Violation Type	MMP Type	CIWQS ID	MMP Amount
*	10/14/2021	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	3.3	7- Day Median	OEV	CHRON	1097209	N/A
*	12/6/2021	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	240	1,600	Instantaneous maximum	OEV	CHRON	1099362	N/A
*	1/20/2022	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	4.5	7-Day Median	OEV	CHRON	1101299	N/A
1	3/31/2023	pH	SU	6.5	6.2	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	NCHRON	1116207	\$0
2	8/03/2023	pH	SU	8.5	8.8	Instantaneous Maximum	OEV	NCHRON	1125199	\$0
3	8/11/2023	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	4	7-day Median	OEV	NCHRON	1120809	\$0
4	1/07/2024	Total Suspended Solids	mg/L	15	17	Weekly Average	CAT 1	NCHRON	1124688	\$0
5	1/21/2024	Total Suspended Solids	mg/L	15	23	Weekly Average	CAT 1	SIG	1124687	\$3,000
6	1/28/2024	Total Suspended Solids	mg/L	15	31	Weekly Average	CAT 1	SIG	1124685	\$3,000

ATTACHMENT A TO SETTLEMENT OFFER NUMBER. R5-2025-0517
Record of Violations Subject to Mandatory Minimum Penalties

#	Violation Date	Parameter	Units	Limit	Measured	Period	Violation Type	MMP Type	CIWQS ID	MMP Amount
7	1/31/2024	Total Suspended Solids	mg/L	10	20	Monthly Average	CAT 1	SIG	1124690	\$3,000
8	1/25/2024	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	4.5	7-day Median	OEV	CHRON	1124691	\$3,000
9	1/26/2024	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	4.5	7-day Median	OEV	CHRON	1124692	\$3,000
10	1/30/2024	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	4.5	7-day Median	OEV	CHRON	1124689	\$3,000
11	1/31/2024	Total Coliform	MPN/100 mL	2.2	13	7-day Median	OEV	CHRON	1124686	\$3,000
12	2/03/2024	Total Suspended Solids (TSS)	mg/L	15	18	Weekly Average	CAT 1	CHRON	1125442	\$3,000
13	2/6/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.4	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	CHRON	1131088	\$3,000
14	2/15/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.4	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	Exempt ¹	1131089	\$0
15	2/24/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.4	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	Exempt ¹	1131090	\$0
16	2/14/2024	Nitrate Plus Nitrite (as N)	mg/L	16	18	Weekly Average	CAT 1	Exempt ¹	1125443	\$0
17	2/29/2024	Nitrate Plus Nitrite (as N)	mg/L	10	18	Monthly Average	CAT 1	Exempt ¹	1125444	\$0
18	3/1/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.2	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	Exempt ¹	1131091	\$0
19	3/4/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.4	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	Exempt ¹	1131092	\$0

ATTACHMENT A TO SETTLEMENT OFFER NUMBER. R5-2025-0517
Record of Violations Subject to Mandatory Minimum Penalties

#	Violation Date	Parameter	Units	Limit	Measured	Period	Violation Type	MMP Type	CIWQS ID	MMP Amount
20	3/5/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.2	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	Exempt ¹	1131093	\$0
21	3/6/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.2	Instantaneous Minimum	OEV	Exempt ¹	1131094	\$0
22	3/31/2024	DCBM	ug/L	1.7	3.5	Monthly Average	CAT 2	SIG	1126792	\$3,000
23	7/20/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.4	Continuous	OEV	CHRON	1131507	\$3,000
24	7/21/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.4	Continuous	OEV	CHRON	1131508	\$3,000
25	7/30/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	6.3	Continuous	OEV	CHRON	1131509	\$3,000
26	8/14/2024	pH	SU	>6.5	5.8	Continuous	OEV	CHRON	1132936	\$3,000

Notes:

*Supporting violations addressed in ACLC R5-2022-0508

- Violations were exempt from mandatory minimum penalties under CWC 13385(j)(1)(D) for 90 days starting on 12 February 2024, as specified in the approval letter issued by the Central Valley Water Board on 16 January 2024.

Total Mandatory Minimum Penalty = \$42,000

ATTACHMENT A TO SETTLEMENT OFFER NUMBER. R5-2025-0517
Record of Violations Subject to Mandatory Minimum Penalties

Table B. Definition

Abbreviation	Description
CAT 1	Violation of effluent limitation for Group I pollutant.
CAT 2	Violation of effluent limitation for Group II pollutant
CHRON	Chronic violation as defined by Water Code section 13385 (i). Any non-serious violation that falls within a 180-day period with three preceding violations. Thus, the fourth non-serious violation that occurs within a 180-day period is subject to MMPs.
CIWQS	California Integrated Water Quality System database. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ciwqs/
CTOX	Violation of chronic toxicity effluent limitation.
DREP	Deficient reporting violation. This will only result in MMPs if the report is so deficient as to make determination of compliance impossible for the reporting period.
LREP	Late Reporting violation. Every 30-Days a report is late counts as one serious late reporting violation subject to MMPs.
Measured	Reported value for the monitoring period by the Dischargers.
MMP Type	Classification of the type of MMP violation.
Occurrence Date	Date that a violation occurred. For averaging period limitation violations, such as weekly and monthly averages, the last day of the reporting period is used such as last day of the week (Saturday) and last day of the month, respectively.
OEV	Violation of any constituent-specific effluent limitation not included in Group I or Group II.
NCHRON	Non-serious violation falls within the first three violations in a 180-day period, thus, not subject to MMP.
SIG	Serious Violation: For Group I pollutants that exceed the effluent limitation by 40 percent or more. For Group II pollutants that exceed the effluent limitation by 20 percent or more.

**Offer to Participate in Expedited Payment Letter Program
EPL R5-2025-0517**

**ACCEPTANCE OF CONDITIONAL RESOLUTION
AND WAIVER OF RIGHT TO HEARING; ORDER**

City of Mountain House
EPL No. R5-2025-0517

By signing below and returning this Acceptance of Conditional Resolution and Waiver of Right to Hearing (Acceptance and Waiver) to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board), the City of Mountain House (Discharger) hereby accepts the "Offer to Participate in Expedited Payment Letter Program" (Conditional Offer), incorporated herein by reference, and waives the right to a hearing before the Central Valley Water Board to dispute the allegations of violations described in the Record of Violations (ROV), which is included as Attachment A to the Conditional Offer.

The Discharger agrees that the Conditional Offer shall serve as a complaint pursuant to Article 2.5 of the California Water Code and that no separate complaint is required for the Central Valley Water Board to assert jurisdiction over the alleged violations through its Chief Prosecutor. The Discharger agrees to pay the penalties required by California Water Code section 13385(h) and/or (i), in the sum of \$42,000 (Expedited Payment Amount), which shall be deemed payment in full of any civil liability pursuant to Water Code section 13385 that otherwise might be assessed for the violations described in the ROV. The Discharger understands that this Acceptance and Waiver waives its right to contest the allegations in the ROV and the amount of civil liability assessed for the violations.

The Discharger understands that this Acceptance and Waiver does not address or resolve liability for any violation that is not specifically identified in the ROV.

Upon execution by the Discharger, the completed Acceptance and Waiver shall be returned via email and/or U.S. mail to:

Xuan Luo, Senior Water Resources Control Engineer
NPDES Compliance and Enforcement
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
Phone: (916) 464-4606
xuan.luo@waterboards.ca.gov

Offer to Participate in Expedited Payment Letter Program
EPL R5-2025-0517

The Discharger understands that federal regulations set forth at title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, section 123.27(d)(2)(iii) require the Central Valley Water Board to publish notice of and provide at least thirty (30) days for public comment on any proposed resolution of an enforcement action addressing NPDES permit violations. Accordingly, this Acceptance and Waiver, prior to execution by the Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer, will be published as required by law for public comment.

If no comments are received within the notice period that causes the Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer to question the Expedited Payment Amount, the Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer or his designee will execute this Acceptance and Waiver.

The Discharger understands that if significant comments are received in opposition to the Expedited Payment Amount, the offer on behalf of the Central Valley Water Board to resolve the violations set forth in the ROV may be withdrawn. In that circumstance, the Discharger will be advised of the withdrawal and an administrative civil liability complaint may be issued and the matter may be set for a hearing before the Central Valley Water Board. For such a liability hearing, the Discharger understands that this Acceptance and Waiver executed by the Discharger will be treated as a settlement communication and will not be used as evidence in that hearing.

The Discharger further understands that once the Acceptance and Waiver is executed by the Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer or his designee, the full payment required by the deadline set forth below is a condition of this Acceptance and Waiver. In accordance with California Water Code section 13385(n)(1) and California Water Code section 13385.1(c)(1), funds collected for violations of effluent limitations and reporting requirements pursuant to sections 13385 and 13385.1 shall be deposited in the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account. Accordingly, the **\$42,000** liability shall be paid by a cashiers or certified check made out to the "State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account." The Discharger may choose to submit the full payment with the Waiver. However, the payment must be submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the date the Acceptance and Waiver is executed by the Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer or his designee.

Please mail the check to:

State Water Resources Control Board, Accounting Office
Attn: EPL R5-2025-0517 Payment
PO Box 1888
Sacramento, California, 95812-1888

The Discharger shall also provide a copy of the wavier form and check via email to the Central Valley Water Board (Xuan.Luo@waterboards.ca.gov).

Offer to Participate in Expedited Payment Letter Program
EPL R5-2025-0517

I hereby affirm that I am duly authorized to act on behalf of and to bind the Discharger in the making and giving of this Acceptance and Waiver.

Discharger Name

BY: Original Signed By

Signed Name

6/3/2025

Date

Karen Morgan

Printed or Typed Name

Utility Manager

Title

IT IS SO ORDERED PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTION 13385

Patrick Pulupa
Executive Officer