

**22 AUGUST 2025 BOARD MEETING
CONTESTED AGENDA ITEM**

AGENDA ITEM: 14

SUBJECT:

CITY OF MERCED, MERCED WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY, MERCED COUNTY

BOARD ACTION:

Consideration of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Renewal (NPDES Permit CA0079219)

BACKGROUND:

The City of Merced (hereinafter, Discharger) is the owner and operator of the Merced Wastewater Treatment Facility (hereinafter, Facility), located at 10260 Gove Road, Merced, CA 95341. The Discharger provides sewerage service for the City of Merced and serves a population of approximately 93,000. Disinfected tertiary-treated wastewater is discharged to (1) Hartley Slough, a water of the United States, (2) the Merced Wildlife Management Area, and (3) the Land Application Area.

The design average dry weather flow capacity of the Facility is 12.0 million gallons per day (MGD). Based on demand, the Discharger plans to complete two phased expansions at the Facility to increase the design daily average flow capacity to 16.0 MGD and up to 20.0 MGD. The current treatment system at the Facility consists of the following: a headworks pump station with fine screens and grit removal; primary clarifiers; activated sludge basins with internal separate anoxic denitrification basins; secondary clarifiers; flocculation basins; filters; ultraviolet disinfection; a rock re-aeration outfall; and a storm water basin. Solids handling and treatment include: a dissolved air flotation thickener, primary digesters, digest gas holder, solids dewatering facility, centrate pump station, lined equalization basin; and lined active solar dryers. Dried biosolids are applied to the Land Application Area, except the abandoned ponds 5 and 6 area.

Discharges from the Facility are currently regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2020-0014 (NPDES Permit), adopted by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) on 16 April 2020. An Order is proposed to renew the NPDES permit.

The proposed Order includes new or updated effluent limitations for ammonia nitrogen, nitrate plus nitrite, total recoverable copper, and chronic whole effluent toxicity. The proposed Order removes effluent limits for chlorpyrifos and diazinon, electrical conductivity, and acute whole effluent toxicity. The proposed Order also establishes a Performance-Based Salinity Trigger for electrical conductivity and requires compliance

with the Salt and Nitrate Control Programs, via participation in the Prioritization and Optimization Study and the local Nitrate Management Zone, respectively. Additionally, the proposed Order includes requirements for submitting a Former Sludge Drying Beds Closure Work Plan and Final Technical Report to permanently decommission the former unlined sludge drying beds.

ISSUES:

The tentative Order was issued for a 30-day public comment period on 19 June 2025 with comments due on 21 July 2025. Public comments were received from the Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA) and Ms. Jo Anne Kipps. A Response to Comments document is included in the agenda package that summarizes the written comments followed by responses by Central Valley Water Board staff. Revisions were made to the tentative Order based on the comments received, and other revisions include minor edits to improve clarity.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed NPDES permit.

REVIEWS:

Management Review:	MSS, ASM – 7/28/25
Legal Review:	CM 7/29/2025

BOARD MEETING LOCATION:

State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

AND VIA VIDEO AND TELECONFERENCE