

**27 FEBRUARY 2026 BOARD MEETING
UNCONTESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

AGENDA ITEM: 14

SUBJECT:

The following are proposed permits for consideration of adoption. All agencies and dischargers concur or have offered no comments.

BOARD ACTION:

Consideration of NPDES Permit Renewals.

BACKGROUND:

**A) CITY OF MERCED, MERCED WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY,
MERCED COUNTY**

The City of Merced (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 Control Program, via participation in the Prioritization and Optimization Study. 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 and to fix typographical and grammatical errors.

Additional revisions were added to include a reopener and background information regarding recent litigation concerning the State Policy for Water Quality Control: Toxicity Provisions.

B) SIERRA PACIFIC INDUSTRIES, BURNETT DIVISION SAWMILL, SHASTA COUNTY

The Sierra Pacific Industries (Discharger) is the owner and operator of Burney Division Sawmill (Facility), located at 36336 Highway 299 East, Burney CA, 96013. The Facility is comprised of a sawmill and planing mill that can produce up to 260 million board feet of construction grade lumber annually and a biomass (i.e., wood burning) cogeneration plant that can produce 20 megawatts of electrical power. Sawmill operations consist of log scaling, wet and dry log storage, mechanical log debarking, sawmill, planing mill, kilns, lumber storage, aboveground storage of petroleum hydrocarbons, equipment fueling and maintenance, storage of used equipment, paved and unpaved roadways, a truck shop, and an office. The Facility discharges industrial storm water to Canyon Creek, a water of the United States tributary to Burney Creek and the Pit River within the Lower Pit watershed. In addition, the Facility discharges wastewater from the cogeneration and sawmill operations to five unlined storage, treatment, and disposal ponds. Wastewater from the cogeneration and sawmill operations is prohibited from discharge to surface water.

Discharge from the Facility is currently regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2020-0017 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 NPDES permit will remove the existing acute toxicity effluent limitations. In addition, the proposed permit will remove the existing receiving water limitations except for receiving water limitations for toxicity, which are included as a requirement under state law only. Additionally, because the discharge to surface water consists solely of storm water runoff from the log deck, the proposed Order continues to implement industrial storm water action levels along with implementation of best management practices to regulate the discharge. The proposed Order includes new or updated numeric storm water action levels for aluminum, electrical conductivity, manganese, settleable solids, and zinc. In addition, the proposed Order includes state law-based land discharge specifications for the discharge of wastewater to land.

ISSUES:

The tentative Order was issued for a 30-day public comment period on 18 December 2025 with comments due on 17 January 2026. Public comments were received from the Sacramento River Source Water Protection Program (SRSWPP). 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.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the NPDES Permit and TSO.

REVIEWS:

Management Review:	
Legal Review:	

BOARD MEETING LOCATION:

Central Valley Water Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

AND VIA VIDEO AND TELECONFERENCE