



# Enforcement News

## \$2.2 Million Settlement Reached in 2015 Hyperion Treatment Plant Sewage Spill

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 19, 2018

**Contact:** Miryam Barajas

[Miryam.Barajas@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Miryam.Barajas@waterboards.ca.gov)

Los Angeles --The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board has reached a \$2.262 million settlement with the City of Los Angeles following two September 2015 incidents in which partially treated municipal wastewater containing plastic waste and other debris was discharged into Santa Monica Bay leading to beach closures and widespread public concern.

The alleged violations involved the unpermitted discharge of floating plastic debris, such as feminine hygiene products, lancets and other waste items, that were discharged from the underground stormdrain system at the Hyperion Treatment Plant, the city's largest wastewater treatment plant.

A review of the incidents found that a large storm event, a failed valve, and flooding of the pumping plant's basement combined with old plastic waste caught in the Hyperion stormdrain system caused the unauthorized discharge through the plant's one-mile outfall to Santa Monica Bay. The incidents occurred while the plant's regular five-mile outfall was closed for an upgrade to the plant's pumping system.

"A number of factors contributed to these unfortunate incidents that put thousands of residents at risk for exposure to the offending waste and resulted in the closure of two beaches," said Deborah Smith, Executive Officer for the Los Angeles Regional Water Board. "Since that time, and due to ongoing discussions, the City has taken corrective actions and implemented new inspection and cleaning protocols to make sure these kinds of incidents won't happen again."

At the request of the Los Angeles Regional Water Board, the city convened an advisory panel to investigate the incident and provide recommendations to prevent a recurrence. Following discussion with city officials, the board's enforcement staff feel confident that the measures will prevent and eliminate floating plastic debris and other trash from entering into the City's stormwater and sewage collection system in the future.

The Sept. 15 event resulted in the discharge of approximately 30 million gallons of secondary treated wastewater combined with stormwater and solid debris from city sewage. A longer incident began on Sept. 21, causing beaches to close for four days and resulting in community apprehension about entering or using Santa Monica Bay waters for more than a month after the beach closure was lifted.



The \$2.262 million settlement includes \$1.131 million that will be deposited in the State Water Board Cleanup and Abatement Account. The remaining amount will fund two specific supplementary environmental projects (SEP) intended to reduce and prevent pollution from entering inland streams that connect to Santa Monica Bay and increase public awareness of the risks of water-borne pollution.

The Environmental Cleanup and Awareness SEP, led by Heal the Bay and 11 partner grassroots community-based organizations and environmental groups, will include inland river and coastal cleanups, outreach and water literacy education. The Stormwater Quality Improvement and Infiltration SEP will be implemented in locations that drain to Santa Monica Bay to treat and improve the quality of stormwater discharges.

For more information on the settlement agreement please [visit](#).

The jurisdiction of the [Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board](#) encompasses all coastal watersheds and drainages flowing to the Pacific Ocean between Rincon Point and the eastern Los Angeles County line, as well as the drainages of five coastal islands, rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, groundwater and the Pacific Ocean within three nautical miles of the coast.

The Los Angeles Region is the State's most densely populated and industrialized region. It has a population of more than 10 million people, thousands of regulated facilities, and a great diversity of built and natural environments to regulate, protect and enjoy. The Los Angeles Water Board has a staff of 149 employees and an annual operating budget of more than \$30 million.

##