

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN DIEGO REGION**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
MARCH 12, 2025**

**ITEM 4**

**SUBJECT**

NPDES Permit Amendment: Tentative Order No. R9-2025-0001, Amending Order No. R9-2022-0005, NPDES No. CA0107417, Waste Discharge Requirements for the South Orange County Wastewater Authority Discharge to the Pacific Ocean through the San Juan Creek Ocean Outfall (Tentative Order No. R9-2025-0001). (Joann Lim)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend adoption of Tentative Order No. R9-2025-0001 (**Supporting Document Nos. 1 and 2**).

**KEY ISSUE**

The Tentative Order modifies Order No. R9-2022-0005 to:

- update the address for the Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant,
- add discharge requirements for the proposed Ranch Water Filtration Plant,
- update the discharge/ownership of 3A Water Reclamation Plant, and
- correct some typographical errors.

Although the Tentative Order adds a facility and its discharge to Order No. R9-2022-0005, the Tentative Order does not change the existing total permitted flow to the Pacific Ocean through the San Juan Creek Ocean Outfall (SJCOO).

**PRACTICAL VISION**

The addition of the proposed Ranch Water Filtration Plant is consistent with Chapter 6 of the Practical Vision, *Strategize to Achieve Resilient Local Water Supply*. Chapter 6 provides that the San Diego Water Board use its authority to help achieve a resilient local water supply, and to advance water security by using local water sources in a manner that improves water quality and reduces greenhouse emissions associated with water transport. The proposed Ranch Water Filtration Plant, once constructed and operational, will treat groundwater to produce drinking water. By 2050, up to 5000 acre-feet of water will be leased from Rancho Mission Viejo Water Company. By supporting the proposed Ranch Water Filtration Plant, the San Diego Water Board is using its authority to continue to help provide a resilient local water supply to the San Diego Region, while protecting water quality.

**DISCUSSION**

South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) is a public joint powers authority. Two of the member agencies of SOCWA include Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) and Moulton Niguel Water District (MNWD). SOCWA owns and operates the SJCOO. SOCWA and the member agencies own and operate the facilities that discharge to the SJCOO under Order No. R9-2022-0005. The location of the SJCOO and the associated facilities are shown in **Supporting Document No. 3**, Facility Map.

The Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant is owned and operated by SMWD and is one of the facilities that is discharging to the SJCOO under Order No. R9-2022-0005. The address for the Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant changed from 28793 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 to 29960 Cow Camp Road, Rancho Mission Viejo, CA 92694; however, the physical location did not change. The Tentative Order updates the address.

By email dated May 16, 2023, SOCWA and SMWD requested an amendment to Order No. R9-2022-0005 to add waste brine discharges from the proposed Ranch Water Filtration Plant to the SJCOO. The proposed facility will treat groundwater from nine Rancho Mission Viejo Water wells to produce drinking water and will discharge the waste brine to the SJCOO. The Tentative Order adds discharge prohibitions, effluent limitations, and monitoring requirements for the waste brine discharges for the proposed Ranch Water Filtration Plant.

The 3A Water Reclamation Plant is another facility that is discharging to the SJCOO under Order No. R9-2022-0005. By letter dated December 12, 2024, SOCWA and MNWD requested an update to the discharger/ownership of the 3A Water Reclamation Plant from SMWD and MNWD to only MNWD. The Tentative Order updates the ownership of the 3A Water Reclamation Plant.

The Tentative Order was noticed for a public hearing and released for public review and comment on December 16, 2024. The public comment period closed on January 15, 2025. The San Diego Water Board did not receive comments regarding the Tentative Order during the comment period.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Tentative Order was noticed and released for public review and comment on December 16, 2024, with comments due by January 15, 2025. The Notice of Public Hearing and Opportunity to Comment was posted on the San Diego Water Board website for the duration of the comment period and sent to all interested parties. The Notice announced a public hearing to be held on March 12, 2025, availability of the Tentative Order for review, and provided instructions for submitting written comments. A copy of the Notice is provided as **Supporting Document No. 4**. Notice of the public hearing on the Tentative Order was also provided in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the March 12, 2025, San Diego Water Board meeting, which is posted on the San Diego Water Board website.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

1. Tentative Order No. R9-2025-0001
2. Attachment 1 to Tentative Order No. R9-2025-0001
3. Facility Map
4. Notice of Public Hearing and Opportunity to Comment