

June 21, 2012

To whom this may concern:

As an eyewitness to the events of March 17-19, 2007, I am baffled and beyond disappointment at the outcome of the State's investigation of the dumping of the contents of a digester to San Pablo Bay by the Novato Sanitary District.

Did the State's legal staff look at the evidence? I am referring to the photos of the effluent ponds full of sludge; the log book entries describing how the entire plant was disabled for days; how the dechlorination station could no longer analyze or feed bisulfate because it was so badly plugged (moot point since there was no chlorine residual due to the fact the effluent to the bay was sludge, not treated wastewater).

How many of the more than twelve operators, mechanics, collections workers and contractors were interviewed? Were they not credible?

I, like most operators in this state, take my occupation seriously. We are given a responsibility to keep our receiving waters clean. If we weren't dedicated to this credo, the extra hours studying for exams, after hour call-outs and holiday work would negate any rewards received from this career.

Operators from other agencies when hearing about the happenings of March 2007, found it hard to believe. To a person none have ever heard of an intentional dumping of this magnitude.

More importantly, what kind of message does this send to other agencies and their staff? How willing would someone be to report a violation when there are little or no consequences to the offending party and the reportee suffers retribution?

If this is how the systems works, then I think it is dysfunctional. What kind of controlling legal authority is the State Water Resources Control Board when one of the most egregious environmental acts occurs and essentially no one is held accountable?

In the future, when reflecting on these events from the last three years, I can only summarize my thoughts. The guilty were unpunished, the conscientious were demonized and the State squandered funds that could have been better spent in other areas.

Sincerely,

James Lynch  
California Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator