

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Robert Schlipf)  
MEETING DATE: March 10, 2010

- ITEM: 6
- SUBJECT: East Bay Municipal Utility District, Special District No. 1, Main Wastewater Treatment Plant and Interceptor Conveyance System, Oakland, Alameda County - Reissuance of NPDES Permit
- CHRONOLOGY: June 2001 – Board reissues NPDES permit  
September 2003 – Board amends NPDES permit
- DISCUSSION: The Revised Tentative Order (Appendix A) would reissue the NPDES permit that covers East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD) Main Wastewater Treatment Plant and its Interceptor Conveyance System. This plant provides secondary level treatment for domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater collected from the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont, and the Stege Sanitary District (serving El Cerrito, Kensington, and part of Richmond). The combined population of the service area is about 650,000. EBMUD discharges on average 65 million gallons per day of treated effluent to Central San Francisco Bay via a deepwater diffuser that is about 5,700 feet offshore.
- During wet weather, inflow and infiltration into upstream collection systems significantly increases flows to the main treatment plant, which can exceed the plant's secondary biological treatment capacity. Under these conditions, EBMUD blends treated effluent from its primary clarifiers with fully treated effluent from its secondary clarifiers prior to discharging to the Bay. This type of discharge is called "blending" or "blended discharge" and occurs roughly 10 to 20 times each wet season and typically lasts less than 10 hours each time. During these events, the blended discharge would be in compliance with effluent limits.
- As part of a related but separate effort, EBMUD is taking actions that will lead to less blending. This effort is required by a court order that was an outcome of a lawsuit in 2009 by the U.S. EPA and this Board against EBMUD for discharges in violation of permit requirements from its wet weather facilities. In very severe storms (about 10 times per wet season) when influent flows exceed pumping and/or storage capacities in the system, EBMUD also diverts wastewater flows from its interceptor system for discharge through its wet weather facilities.

These discharges are covered under a separate permit the Board adopted in January 2009. The 2009 lawsuit ensued because discharges from these wet weather facilities do not meet treatment standards. The court order requires EBMUD to implement and develop measures that will lead to reducing wet weather inflow and infiltration that causes discharges from its wet weather facilities. These actions will, in turn, reduce the need to blend at EBMUD's main wastewater treatment plant. However, until discharges from the wet weather facilities can be eliminated, blended discharges must also continue and are preferable because they are in compliance with limitations and receive dilution through the deepwater outfall more than a mile off the Bay shoreline.

San Francisco Baykeeper, Our Children's Earth (OCE), the East Bay Collection System Agencies, and EBMUD commented (Appendix B) on a tentative order that Board staff distributed for public review. We have responded to all comments (Appendix C) and made appropriate changes, all of which are reflected in the Revised Tentative Order (Appendix A). We resolved many issues; however, some remain.

The most significant issues are from Baykeeper and OCE. Their main concern is that the tentative order does not prohibit blending or require adequate monitoring during blending events. We disagree. The approach taken in the Revised Tentative Order is consistent with federal regulations. The proposed approach for allowing blending was developed in close coordination with the U.S. EPA. This is the same approach the Board has adopted in other permits since 2006. Further, EBMUD is already required under the 2009 court order referenced above to take actions that will lead to lower wet weather flows and less blending. On the monitoring issue, the proposed requirements are consistent with those the Board imposed on other dischargers at the Board's February meeting. These monitoring requirements are appropriate for blending events considering the short-term nature of the discharge, and practical considerations due to the unpredictable nature and timing of storms.

We anticipate that some commenters may reiterate their concerns at the Board meeting.

RECOMMEN-  
DATION:

Adoption of the Revised Tentative Order

CIWQS Place ID:

222132 (RS)

Appendices:

- A. Revised Tentative Order
- B. Correspondence
- C. Response to Comments