

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

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT: Robert Schlipf  
MEETING DATE: April 14, 2021

**ITEM: 5A**

**City of St. Helena, City of St. Helena Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Plant and Wastewater Collection System, St. Helena, Napa County – Reissuance of NPDES Permit**

**DISCUSSION:**

This Tentative Order (Appendix A) would reissue the NPDES permit for the City of St. Helena's wastewater treatment plant, which serves approximately 6,000 people. The plant treats about 0.5 million gallons of wastewater per day. During dry weather, the City discharges treated wastewater to about 80 acres of irrigation fields. Consistent with the previous order, the City discharges to the Napa River during wet weather when the irrigation fields are saturated and cannot be used. Two other municipalities also discharge to the river. To ensure that the City's discharge does not fully use the river's assimilative capacity, the Tentative Order would continue to require a specific river flow-to-effluent flow ratio for the City to discharge.

The Board issued a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) to the City in 2016. The CDO required the City to modify its treatment system to meet more stringent effluent limits for biochemical oxygen demand and total suspended solids by spring 2021. The City has fallen behind the CDO time schedule because of delays related to the Napa County wildfires in fall 2017 and concerns about nitrate levels in the groundwater underlying the irrigation fields. To protect groundwater, the City planted native grasses in its irrigation fields to improve nitrogen uptake and incorporated nitrogen removal into its treatment plant design. The City expects to begin operating a new advanced secondary treatment system by spring 2023.

We did not receive any comments on the Tentative Order and expect this item to be uncontested.

**APPENDIX:**

A. Tentative Order

Appendix A  
Tentative Order