

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Francisco Bay Region**

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN COMMENTS

On the Tentative Order for
West County Agency, West County Wastewater District, City of Richmond and
Richmond Municipal Sewer District No. 1; West County Wastewater District Treatment
Plant, and Richmond Municipal Sewer District Water Pollution Control Plant, and
Wastewater Collection Systems

Richmond, Contra Costa County

The Regional Water Board received written comments from West County Wastewater District (District) on a tentative order distributed for public comment on April 11, 2024. The comments are summarized below in *italics* (paraphrased for brevity) and followed by a staff response. For the full content and context of the comments, please refer to the comment letter. To request a copy of the comment letter, see the contact information provided in Fact Sheet section 8.5 of the Revised Tentative Order.

Revisions are shown with ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions and underline for additions.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSE

April 15, 2024, Comment: *The District identified a typo in Provision 6.3.5.3, Table 5, Task 1. The District requested the investment minimum requirement for gravity sewer improvements be corrected from “\$53.4 million” to “\$25.0 million.”*

May 8, 2024, Comment: *The District stated that it reviewed its capital improvement plan, and, due to the costs of its Clean and Green Project and planned force main replacements, the investment minimum requirement for gravity sewer improvements in Provision 6.3.5.3, Table 5, Task 1, should be revised from “\$25 million” to “\$10 million.”*

May 10, 2024, Comment: *Following a request from Regional Water Board staff for more information regarding the District’s May 8, 2024, comment, the District stated its commitment to invest \$15 million toward gravity sewer, force main, and lift station upgrades and replacements within the permit term.*

The District stated that it wants to reserve part of its budget for emergency repairs as a part of its “risk-based allocation of resources” strategy, particularly during this permit term as it constructs major capital improvement projects. The District asserted that retaining the emergency repair fund would allow the District the flexibility to re-prioritize and invest in projects that will best protect water quality and that it did not view its revision request as a lower investment, but a means of balancing its budget to be more adaptable. The District also stated that, with its ongoing Clean and Green Project

estimated to cost \$80 million through 2025, it needs sufficient reserves to potentially fund some of these projects with matching grants.

Instead of focusing on gravity sewers, the District requested that permit requirements reflect the District’s work and responsibilities throughout the entire sanitary sewer system, including its force mains, gravity sewers, and lift stations.

Response: We agree that it’s important for the District to have financial flexibility to obtain matching grants and move forward with improvements under its Clean and Green Project, as described in Fact Sheet section 2.1.7.1. Under these circumstances, the District’s \$15 million commitment toward improving its sanitary sewer system is reasonable for this permit term. We revised Provision 6.3.5.3, Table 5, Tasks 1 and 2, as follows:

Table 5. Tasks to Eliminate Overflows

Task No.	Task	Compliance Date
1	Invest Minimum of \$53.4 million for Gravity Sewer 15 million for Sanitary System Improvement Projects. West County Wastewater District shall invest a minimum of \$53.4 million toward gravity sewer 15 million toward sanitary system improvement projects.	July 31, 2029
2	Submit Progress Reports on Gravity Sanitary System Improvements. West County Wastewater District shall submit an annual report identifying its planned gravity sewer sanitary sewer system projects, its schedules for completing the projects, and its progress toward completing them as they make the investments required by Task 1.	Annually, with Annual Self-Monitoring Report due February 1 each year

We revised Attachment F, section 6.3.5.3, as follows:

6.3.5.3. **Tasks to Eliminate Overflows.** This provision is required to ensure that the West County Wastewater District properly operates and maintains its sanitary sewer system to prevent excessive infiltration and inflow and related unauthorized discharges. Excessive infiltration into the sanitary sewer system during a large storm caused the 41.4-million-gallon overflow in January 2023 (see Fact Sheet Section 2.4.1). Provision 6.3.5.3 requires West County Wastewater District to invest a minimum of ~~\$53.4 million in gravity sewer~~ 15 million in sanitary sewer system improvement projects within its sanitary sewer system.