

# Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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**LAHONTAN WATER BOARD PROSECUTION TEAM RELEASES \$4 MILLION SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL FOR VIOLATIONS OF BOARD ORDERS BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS IN LANCASTER AND PALMDALE**  
*Public Review and Comments Encouraged*

**SOUTH LAKE TAHOE**— The Lahontan Water Board's Prosecution Team is proposing a settlement with the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts that would cover litigation between the parties over compliance schedules and liability for violations of Water Board orders. District No. 14 (Lancaster) and District No. 20 (Palmdale) incurred liability for violations of various orders of the Board, including a waste discharge permit, a Cleanup and Abatement Order issued in 2003 and Cease and Desist Orders issued in 2004.

Before the settlement proposal becomes effective, it must be accepted by the Lahontan Water Board. Under the terms of the proposal, the Districts would pay \$4 million. The first \$152,000 will go to the State Water Resources Control Board's Waste Discharge Permit Fund and \$48,000 will go to the California Department of Justice for consultant costs associated with representing the Water Boards. Additionally, the Districts will pay \$3.8 million over five years to pay for a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP). The funds will help to pay for a major recycled water distribution system in the Antelope Valley, the "Antelope Valley Recycled Water Project."

In 2002, the Lahontan Water Board ordered District No. 14 - Lancaster to eliminate the threatened nuisance caused by its treated wastewater discharges when they overflowed Piute Ponds onto Rosamond Dry Lake, an area of Edwards Air Force Base property. Edwards AFB raised concerns when it appeared that the discharges were affecting the ability of the Air Force to use the lakebed as an emergency landing area for military aircraft. Although District No. 14 has been implementing actions to eliminate those overflows, the threat to Edwards AFB operations will continue until the District completes its plant upgrade.

District No. 20 - Palmdale violated Waste Discharge Requirements, a Cleanup and Abatement Order and a Cease and Desist Order because its effluent disposal caused or contributed to nitrate pollution of the groundwater. In the last few years, the District has been reducing the amount of nitrate that percolates to groundwater by using the wastewater to grow hay crops, but discharges of nitrogen continue at rates higher than the crops can use. When the District completes the facilities upgrade contemplated by the settlement (as well as previous Board orders and the District's long range facilities plan), the on-going pollution will cease. Cleanup of the polluted groundwater is governed by separate actions of the Water Board.

The Districts are still required to take actions necessary to comply with waste discharge permits, eliminate threatened nuisance conditions, clean up polluted groundwater, and discharge treated wastewater in a manner that does not cause nuisance or pollution. The Districts have increased user fees to cover the costs of implementing these facilities.

This settlement will fund portions of the "Antelope Valley Recycled Water Project." The project will include construction of infrastructure necessary to convey recycled water to

public and private facilities throughout the Antelope Valley. The project will ultimately include 38 miles of pipeline, three storage reservoirs, and five pump stations that will link the wastewater treatment plants serving Lancaster, Palmdale and Rosamond. It will provide treated water for reuse to six water districts in the valley.

Written comments on the settlement proposal must be submitted to the Water Board by **April 13, 2007**. The Water Board will consider the settlement proposal during its regularly scheduled meeting on **March 14 and 15, 2007**, in Lancaster, CA. The Board does not, however, plan to either accept or reject the settlement at this meeting. It will take action on the settlement proposal at its **May 23-24, 2007** meeting. Copies of the settlement proposal can be reviewed at the Water Board's Victorville office (760) 241-6583, the Water Board's South Lake Tahoe office (530) 542-5400, or on-line at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/Lahontan>. Copies are available upon request.

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is one of nine regional boards in the state. Among its principal duties, the Board protects and restores California's water quality east of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada crests from the Oregon border through the Mojave Desert. It does so by setting region-wide water quality standards and waste discharge requirements, enforcing both federal and state water quality statutes, regulating cleanup of sites that pose a potential threat to water quality, and educating the public on water quality issues. The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is comprised of nine individuals, each of whom is appointed by the Governor, and a small professional staff, comprised mostly of scientists, engineers and geologists. For more information, go to: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>.