

**Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
Board Meeting – 13/14 September 2007**

**Response to Written Comments for Tejon-Castac Water District, Tejon Industrial
Complex Wastewater Treatment Facility,
Kern County
Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements and Cease and Desist Order**

At a public hearing scheduled for 25 January 2008, the Regional Water Board will consider adoption of Waste Discharge Requirements and Cease and Desist Order for the Tejon-Castac Water District (District) and Tejon Ranchcorp, Tejon Industrial Complex Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). This document contains responses to written comments received from interested parties regarding the Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements (TWDRs) and accompanying Draft Cease and Desist Order (CDO) circulated on 19 November 2007. Written comments from interested parties were required to be received by the Regional Water Board by 17 December 2007 to receive full consideration. Written comments were received from:

1. Tejon-Castac Water District and Tejon Ranchcorp (Discharger)

Written comments from the above interested party are summarized below, followed by the response of Regional Water Board staff.

COMMENT 1: The District is the responsible party for the discharge as identified in Finding 1 of the TWDRs. Tejon Ranchcorp granted permanent easement of the land to the District on which the WWTF resides, and requests that Tejon Ranchcorp be removed as Discharger.

RESPONSE: Although the District is the operator, the Tejon Ranchcorp owns the land on which the WWTF resides. In addition, this is not a typical case of an unrelated lessor/lessee. The District serves only land owned by Tejon Ranch Company, which owns 100% of Tejon Ranchcorp, and land that Tejon Ranch Co. has sold in the Tejon Industrial Complex. (Tejon Ranch Co. 10-K Annual Report, 3/15/06.) Finding 1 of the TWDRs and the draft cease and desist order continue to name both the District and the Tejon Ranchcorp as Discharger.

COMMENT 2: The District and the Tejon Ranchcorp requests the draft CDO be withdrawn because:

- The District is committed to rectifying the issues raised in the draft CDO.
- The District is progressing rapidly with replacing the existing treatment process with a more-efficient and robust treatment regime and submitted a report of waste discharge (RWD) to expand its flow.
- In August 2007, the District installed a dissolved air flotation (DAF) unit as an interim improvement. The draft CDO should await long-term performance data of the interim measure.
- The draft CDO was based on self-monitoring reports (SMRs) from January 2006 through May 2007. More recent data, especially since the addition of the DAF now show significant improvements and a downward trend. Better performance is expected as the District continues to fine-tune operations and acquire operational experience.

RESPONSE: The District has made recent improvements to the WWTF (installed a DAF unit), which has resulted in an overall improvement in effluent quality. The TWDRs include secondary standards for monthly average and daily maximum 5-day biological oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS), unless the water is used for unrestricted recycling. The draft CDO was issued because, based on historical effluent quality through May 2007, the WWTF was not likely to meet the BOD and TSS limits. Review of data from SMRs from July through November of 2007 show the District would have been in compliance with the BOD monthly average and daily maximum limits, but would have exceeded the TSS daily maximum and monthly average limits in August and November. The District also submitted additional data for December 2007, which shows varying effluent quality depending on where the samples were collected. Samples collected prior to the chlorine contact chamber would comply with the TWDRs' secondary limits.

The District is in the process of completing the design for a new WWTF that should meet the TWDRs requirements. The District anticipates starting construction in the second quarter of 2008 and completing construction within one year. The Discharger has provided documentation to show its progress towards construction of the new WWTF. This time schedule is similar to that in the draft CDO.

COMMENT 3. The District requests the flow limit be increased from 0.06 mgd to 0.1 mgd. The District recently submitted a water balance that shows that it can dispose of at least 0.1 mgd without implementing effluent recycling.

RESPONSE: General Discharge Specification B.1 of the TWDRs has been revised to incorporate a flow limit of 0.1 mgd and Provision I.11 requiring a capacity demonstration removed.

COMMENT 4. Regarding the setback distances specified in Recycling Discharge Specification E.7 of the TWDRs. Revise the specification to be restricted to the use of secondary treated effluent.

RESPONSE: Recycling Discharge Specification E.7 has been revised to specify which setback distances apply to each quality (secondary or disinfected tertiary) of effluent.

COMMENT 5. Regarding Groundwater Limitation 1.a.i of the TWDRs, replace the numerical groundwater limitation of 10 mg/L for nitrate as nitrogen with "to be determined."

RESPONSE: Finding 25 of the TWDRs indicates that the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin (Basin Plan) specifies the beneficial uses of groundwater within the Kern County Basin include municipal and domestic supply. Finding 26 of the TWDRs indicates that to protect these beneficial uses, the Basin Plan requires, at a minimum, waters designated as domestic and municipal supply to meet the MCLs specified in Title 22 (Page III 3, paragraph 2 of the Basin Plan). The nitrate as nitrogen

groundwater limitation reflects the maximum allowable concentration in groundwater for nitrate as nitrogen allowed by the Basin Plan to protect all beneficial uses.

COMMENT 6. Regarding the Information Sheet, page 2, insert “The Discharger may also percolate as a method of recycling if the water balance shows pond storage and percolation rates are adequate for this type of disposal.”

RESPONSE: Findings 39 and 40 of the TWDRs indicate that water recycling is encouraged to replace or supplement the use of fresh water. The percolation of effluent, although at times beneficial, is not considered a method of recycling. In order to encourage effluent recycling, as intended in the Basin Plan, General Discharge Specification B.2 of the TWDRs requires the Discharger to “implement water recycling to the maximum extent feasible.”