

ITEM: 23

SUBJECT: Nichols Pistachio, Pistachio Processing Plant,
Kings and Tulare Counties

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Waste Discharge Requirements (revised).*

BACKGROUND: Nichols Pistachio owns and operates a Pistachio Processing Plant (Plant) at 13762 First Avenue in Kings County, where it processes and packs pistachio nuts. The Plant is currently regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order 93-006, which authorizes a maximum daily discharge of up to 0.244 million gallons per day (mgd) for irrigation on adjacent farmland. The Discharger submitted a Report of Waste Discharge in 1994 with addendums in 1998 and again in 2012 for expansion of its Plant and subsequent increase in flows of up to 2.4 mgd (seasonal average) with a daily maximum of 5 million gallons.

Wastewater from the Plant is generated from cleaning and hulling of pistachios and equipment during the 30 to 40 day processing season that occurs within the 6 to 8 week period between late August and the middle of October. Sampling data shows that the discharge contains high concentrations of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), nitrogen, and dissolved solids, especially potassium. Wastewater from the Plant is screened to remove solids and stored in four lined temporary basins before being discharged into the irrigation system for irrigation of crops within the 675 acre Reuse Area.

The proposed WDRs limit the average seasonal flow to 2.4 mgd with a daily maximum of 5 million gallons; sets a cycle average BOD loading limit of 100 lbs/acre/day; and requires nitrogen and hydraulic loading to be at agronomic rates. Provisions in the proposed WDRs also require Nichols Pistachio to submit a salinity control plan and a nutrient wastewater management plan. Additionally, the proposed WDRs require the Discharger to monitor for BOD, nitrogen, potassium and total and fixed dissolved solids and provide a detailed accounting for the application of wastewater within the Reuse Area.

Comments were received regarding the potential to affect the groundwater by the waste constituents as well as the potential to leach metals from soil because at times the pH of the wastewater is low. Some minor revisions to the WDRs have been made. The discharge is not expected to cause or contribute to groundwater containing constituents in concentrations that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the WDRs

Mgmt. Review _____
Legal Review ___PEP___

31 January/1 February 2013 Board Meeting
11020 Sun Center Dr. #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670