

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
NORTH COAST REGION

Resolution No. R1-2007-0073

Policy Statement in the Matter of Recycled Water
Use in the North Coast Region

WHEREAS, the California Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, (Regional Water Board) finds that:

1. The California Legislature has established a statewide goal to recycle one million acre feet of water per year by 2010. (Water Code §13577).
2. The use of potable domestic water for nonpotable uses such as landscape irrigation is considered a waste and an unreasonable use of water, if recycled water is available at a reasonable cost. (Water Code §13550).
3. The California Legislature has declared that the people of the State have a primary interest in the development of facilities to reclaim water containing waste to supplement existing surface and underground water supplies.
4. The California Legislature has declared that the State shall undertake all possible steps to encourage the development of water reclamation facilities so that reclaimed water may be made available to help meet the growing water requirements of the State.
5. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted these principles in Resolution 77-1:

The State Water Board and the Regional Water Boards shall encourage water reclamation projects which meet conditions (a), (b) or (c) below.

- a) Beneficial use will be made of wastewaters that would otherwise be discharged to marine or brackish receiving waters or evaporation ponds,
 - b) Reclaimed water will replace or supplement the use of fresh water or better quality water,
 - c) Reclaimed water will be used to preserve, restore, or enhance instream beneficial uses which include, but are not limited to, fish, wildlife, recreation and aesthetics associated with any surface water or wetlands. State Water Board Resolution 77-1 further states: "the State Board and the Regional Boards shall (a) encourage reclamation and reuse of water in water-short areas of the State, (b) encourage water conservation measures which further extend the water resources of the State, and (c) encourage other agencies, in particular the Department of Water Resources, to assist in implementing this policy."
6. The Regional Water Board has long supported water recycling efforts throughout the North Coast Region, and by this Resolution, reaffirms its commitment to encouraging and facilitating water recycling projects that protect beneficial uses wherever possible. The Water Quality Control Plan for the North

Coast Region (Basin Plan) contains several provisions that present an unintended impediment to current urban water reuse efforts. The Regional Water Board is committed to using the Basin Plan Amendment process to amend those provisions of the Basin Plan that constitute regulatory barriers to developing recycled water projects in the Region.

7. The Regional Water Board recognizes that the City of Santa Rosa is the North Coast Region's largest water recycler and appreciates the City's ongoing efforts and significant financial commitments to the development of recycled water reuse in the Russian River Watershed. Specifically, the Regional Water Board supports the proposed Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project. The Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project is estimated to cost \$120 million and would provide a billion gallons of recycled water per year, reducing the City's use of its potable water supply by an equivalent amount.
8. The City has requested the Regional Water Board to amend the Basin Plan and to revise the City's Storm Water Permit to recognize that small amounts of potable and treated recycled water, used in the Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project areas in accordance with appropriate best management practices do not pose a threat to water quality, and should not be prohibited. The City has indicated that these regulatory changes are needed for the City to commit further, substantial economic resources to the Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project.
9. The Basin Plan currently prohibits any discharges during dry weather (defined as the period from May 15th through September 30th) of wastewater to receiving waters, regardless of level of treatment. This prohibition encourages Permittees to use various land disposal alternatives, including agricultural irrigation, urban landscape irrigation and other wastewater recycling opportunities. The dry-weather discharge prohibition was not intended to limit recycled water use or preclude discharges of small amounts of potable and/or treated recycled water which result from irrigation practices and pose either no threat or a low threat to water quality.
10. The Regional Water Board recognizes that in order to provide the necessary regulatory environment to further support recycled water reuse throughout the North Coast Region, and specifically the Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project, revisions to the Basin Plan need to recognize that treated recycled water is suitable for urban and other reuse projects.
11. Since 2005, the Regional Water Board has been working with stakeholders and various interested parties to develop a Basin Plan amendment that modifies the dry-weather discharge prohibition to recognize that the discharge of small amounts of potable and treated recycled water in connection with irrigation reuse projects constitutes a low threat discharge. The proposed Basin Plan amendment shall consider exempting such low threat discharges that meet specific criteria from the Basin Plan's dry-weather discharge prohibition.
12. The Regional Water Board further recognizes that in order to provide an appropriate regulatory environment to support and encourage recycled water

reuse, and specifically the Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project, the Regional Water Board needs to consider modifications to the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (Storm Water) Permit to recognize that despite implementation of best management practices, small amounts of potable and treated recycled water used for urban irrigation may, from time to time, discharge from irrigation sites, and may not pose a significant threat to water quality.

13. Regional Water Board staff is currently working on renewal of the Storm Water Permit for the City. Staff has committed to evaluating regulatory impediments to the further development of the Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project. The Regional Water Board expects the revised Storm Water Permit to recognize that the runoff of small amounts of irrigation water, including potable and treated recycled water, where appropriate best management practices are implemented, constitutes a low threat discharge. Such a revised Storm Water Permit for the City would provide more appropriate regulation of storm water runoff, and provide the incentives the City needs to maintain and enhance its overall urban reuse of treated recycled water, including the Santa Rosa Urban Reuse Project.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

1. The Regional Water Board is proceeding with consideration of a Basin Plan amendment to allow discharges of small amounts of potable and treated recycled water and other low threat discharges during the dry-weather season, if appropriate best management practices are implemented, beneficial uses are protected, and the discharges do not contribute to water quality degradation or harm to aquatic life.
2. The Regional Water Board will consider modifications to Santa Rosa's Storm Water Permit to provide that low threat discharges of small amounts of potable or treated recycled water used for irrigation applied in accordance with appropriate best management practices will not be prohibited explicitly or through imposition of infeasible conditions.
3. The Regional Water Board, by support of this Resolution, does not intend to eliminate the dry-weather discharge prohibition.

CERTIFICATION

I, Robert R. Klamt, Interim Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, on September 13, 2007.

Robert R. Klamt

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