

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
Thursday, May 8, 2014
River Lodge Conference Center
Fortuna, California

- ITEM: 3
- SUBJECT: Public Hearing on Order No. R1-2014-0014 to consider adoption of proposed Waste Discharge Requirements for **Ocean Farms Inc., Bodega Farms**, WDID No. 1B820220SON, NPDES NO. CA0024481 (*Charles Reed*)
- BOARD ACTION: The Board will consider adoption of Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R1-2014-0014. The Order will serve as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for a period of five years.
- BACKGROUND: Ocean Farms, Inc. (hereinafter Permittee) is the owner and operator of Bodega Farms (hereinafter Facility), an abalone rearing facility.
- The Facility discharges once-through abalone rearing tank wastewater to the surf zone of the Pacific Ocean, a water of the United States. The Permittee was previously regulated by Order No. R1-2008-0063 and NPDES Permit No. CA0024481, which was adopted on July 24, 2008, and expired on September 12, 2013. The Facility was not in operation and did not discharge during the term of the previous permit. Abalone production was temporarily suspended due to a reduced volume and quality of the Facility's intake water that resulted after formation of a sandbar at the outlet of the Estero Americano. The Permittee intends to resume operation when conditions allow.
- When available, seawater is pumped from the Estero Americano during flood tide through a screen to a holding tank, where it is pumped uphill to additional holding tanks. The intake water is filtered through multiple cartridge filters prior to discharge into fiberglass raceway tanks for aquaculture of abalone. Abalone larvae are settled out in the raceway tanks or in a nursery.
- Juvenile abalone seeds are grown out on fiberglass wavy plates and feed on natural occurring diatoms in the intake water when small, and are fed brown kelp as they grow larger. The Facility anticipates a year-round operation, but may not operate during periods when the Estero Americano is closed from tidal influence. During brief periods when the Estero Americano is closed from tidal action by

the formation of a sandbar, seawater is either pumped from the ocean line or re-circulated through the system.

Processing waste, which consists of abalone viscera, is used as land-based compost and is no longer discharged with wastewater.

ISSUES:

Based on timely E-mail correspondence, no major permit concerns were expressed by the Permittee. In its review of the draft Order, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requested and staff implemented minor revisions to the proposed methodology in order to maintain statewide consistency among ocean-discharge permits using the Test of Significant Toxicity (TST) hypothesis testing approach.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Order No. R1-2014-0014, as proposed.

**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS:**

1. Proposed Order No. R1-2014-0014
2. Public Notice