

Executive Officer's Summary Report
1:00 p.m., June 22, 2011
Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: Update on Decommissioning Project and Renewal of NPDES Permit for Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Humboldt Bay Power Plant

DISCUSSION

This is an informational item. Representatives from PG&E staff will be presenting an update on an ongoing project to decommission three power generating units and progress toward the renewal of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, which is tentatively scheduled for public hearing at the September 29, 2011 board meeting.

The PG&E Humboldt Bay Power Plant is located on the shoreline of Humboldt Bay, four miles southwest of the City of Eureka. Until October 2010, the power generating plant consisted of two gas-fired units that had been in place since the mid-1950s and a nuclear unit that operated from 1963 to 1976, but has now been removed. A new fossil fuel power plant, consisting of 10 dual-fuel 16.3 megawatt engine-generator sets became commercially operational in October 2010, replacing the two gas-fired units. A project to decommission the gas-fired units is in progress and scheduled for completion by 2013. Full decommissioning of the former nuclear unit is scheduled for completion in 2015.

Shutdown of the gas-fired units and cessation of once-through cooling water has decreased the effluent flow during the decommissioning project from a continuous discharge of approximately 76 million gallons per day to an intermittent discharge of approximately 7,000 gallons per day. Wastewater generated during the decommissioning project will consist of treated low-level liquid radioactive waste and groundwater that infiltrates the Unit 3 caisson basement and is routed to the radioactive waste treatment system. Concentration limits for radionuclides in the low level liquid radioactive waste discharge are established and enforced by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Storm water runoff from the site will continue through the decommissioning phase of the project and will be regulated under the statewide Industrial Storm Water permit.

The new power generating plant, currently in operation, discharges industrial and sanitary wastewater into the Humboldt Community Services District sanitary sewer system and does not require waste discharge requirements from the Regional Water Board.

PRELIMINARY

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: This is an informational item only.