

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Myriam L. Zech)
MEETING DATE: March 8, 2006

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: **City of Pacifica, Calera Creek Water Recycling Plant, Pacifica, San Mateo County** - Hearing to Consider Mandatory Minimum Penalty (MMP) for Discharge of Partially Treated Wastewater to Waters of the State

CHRONOLOGY: September 19, 2001 – MMP Complaint for \$132,000, for violations incurred by the City's old treatment plant taken off-line in September 2000

DISCUSSION: The City of Pacifica put online the Calera Creek Water Recycling Plant in September 2000. It is a state-of-the-art tertiary treatment facility. In this region, it is only 1 of 2 that uses sequencing batch reactors (SBR), it is the only one that uses autothermophilic aerobic digestors (ATAD), and it is only 1 of 4 that uses ultraviolet disinfection. The facility uses ultraviolet instead of the more common chlorine disinfection to avoid any possibility of chlorine residual in the discharge harming a wetland restoration project along Calera Creek. The facility's SBR has proven difficult to operate. A large number of violations occurred during a 2-year fine-tuning process. Then in 2004, while attempting to reduce odors from the facility's ATAD, the City experienced another round of violations. The City has since fixed its problems and has been in compliance for the past 6 months.

From January 1, 2001, to December 31, 2005, the City violated its NPDES permit limits 137 times. Of this, 132 are subject to a \$396,000 MMP. \$205,000 will be suspended to fund a supplemental environmental project (SEP). The City has signed a waiver to a hearing (Appendix A), and proposes to undertake an SEP. The proposed SEP would provide funding for the purchase of a 4-acre ancient dune field (>10,000 years old) in the area that was slated for development and assessed at \$500,000. This dune field acts as a natural filter for storm drainage prior to the runoff reaching the beach. The City has already secured a \$250,000 Coastal Conservancy grant to partially fund the purchase last year. This SEP meets State Water Board criteria and we plan to approve it.

RECOMMEN-
DATION: No action required.

File No.: 2179.7022 (MLZ)

Appendix: A. Complaint No. R2-2005-0066
B. Signed waiver and SEP proposal