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Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Fines City of Ventura \$717,000. Penalty is for 244 Violations of the State's Water Code at the Ventura Water Reclamation Facility

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board has fined the City of Ventura \$717,000 for 244 violations of the California Water Code. The violations occurred between February 2000 and July 2005 and resulted in wastewater with elevated levels of coliform, mercury, zinc, cyanide, lead and other pollutants being discharged from the Ventura Water Reclamation Facility into the Santa Clara River Estuary.

“The estuary, as well as the entire Santa Clara River, provides critical habitat for plants and animals and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.” said Susan Cloke, Chair of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. “To protect human health and the environment, along with our several billion dollar coastal economy, Federal and State clean water laws must be carefully followed and rigorously enforced.”

In October 2000 and June 2004, the Los Angeles Regional Board set effluent discharge and monitoring requirements for the Ventura Reclamation Facility. The discharge requirements permitted the facility to release into the Santa Clara Estuary up to 14 million gallons per day of tertiary-treated municipal wastewater from domestic, commercial and industrial sources. Effluent limits were established for specific pollutants to ensure protection of water quality in the estuary. Subsequently, the Regional Board approved a compliance schedule, known as a Time Schedule Order, to provide the city with sufficient time to meet the new effluent limits. At the city's request, the Regional Board extended the compliance deadline.

After review of monitoring reports submitted by the city, the Regional Board identified 244 effluent limit violations between February 2000 and July 2005. The Regional Board will continue to examine monitoring reports for effluent violations. The California Water Code sets mandatory minimum penalties of \$3,000 for each effluent violation.

The City of San Buenaventura has 90 days to request that the Regional Board reconsider the wastewater violations and penalties.

The Los Angeles Water Board is one of nine regional boards in the State. Among its principal duties, the Board sets region-wide water quality standards and activity-specific waste discharge requirements, enforces both federal and state clean water statutes, regulates cleanup of sites which pose an immediate or potential threat to water quality and educates the public on water quality issues. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board is comprised of nine individuals, each of whom is appointed by the Governor, and a small professional staff, comprised mostly of scientists, engineers and geologists. (END)