

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL VALLEY REGION

ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINT R5-2016-0517

MANDATORY PENALTY
IN THE MATTER OF

LINDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
YUBA COUNTY AND SUTTER COUNTY

This Complaint is issued to the Linda County Water District (hereafter Discharger) pursuant to California Water Code (Water Code) section 13385, which authorizes the imposition of Administrative Civil Liability, Water Code section 13323, which authorizes the Executive Officer to issue this Complaint and Water Code section 7, which authorizes the delegation of the Executive Officer's authority to a deputy, in this case the Assistant Executive Officer. This Complaint is based on allegations that the Discharger violated provisions of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order R5-2012-0034 (NPDES CA0079651).

The Assistant Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board or Board) alleges the following:

1. The Discharger owns and operates the Linda County Wastewater Treatment Plant (Facility), wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system, which provides sewerage service to the community of Linda and portions of unincorporated Yuba County south of Marysville. Tertiary treated municipal wastewater is discharged to both the Feather River and to evaporation/percolation ponds that lie within the 100-year flood plain of the Feather River, a water of the United States. The ponds discharge directly to the Feather River during floods, and have hydraulic continuity with the Feather River.
2. In order to regulate discharges from the Facility, on 7 June 2012, the Central Valley Water Board issued WDRs Order R5-2012-0034. On 7 June 2012, the Board also issued Order R5-2012-0035, which amended Time Schedule Order (TSO) R5-2011-0056. Amended TSO R5-2011-0056-01 provided interim limitations and allowed until 31 December 2012 to comply with final effluent limitations for nitrate plus nitrite, ammonia, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), total suspended solids (TSS), total coliform organisms, and nitrite. TSO R5-2011-0056-01 also provided an interim limitation for copper, with compliance to be achieved by 1 June 2015. This Complaint considers the exemption from mandatory minimum penalties (MMPs) when the Discharger is in compliance with interim effluent limitations established in the TSO R5-2011-0056-01.
3. On 14 September 2015, the Assistant Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board issued Administrative Civil Liability Complaint (ACLC) R5-2015-0532 for MMPS for effluent violations (identified in Attachment A to ACLC R5-2015-0532) that occurred from 1 April 2014 through 30 June 2015. The Discharger paid the civil liability and the Board considers those effluent violations specifically listed in Attachment A to ACLC R5-2015-0532 to be resolved.
4. This Complaint addresses administrative civil liability for effluent violations that occurred during the period from 1 July 2015 through 31 December 2015. These violations are specifically identified in Attachment A to this Complaint as subject to MMPs. Attachment A to this Complaint is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.
5. On 13 January 2016, Central Valley Water Board staff issued the Discharger a Notice of Violation and draft Record of Violations for effluent limitation violations occurring between 1 May 2015 and

30 November 2015. The Discharger responded on 8 February 2016 and agreed with the violations. This Complaint extends the period through 31 December 2015; no additional violations were found other than those cited in the ROV.

6. Water Code section 13385, subdivisions (h) and (i), require assessment of mandatory penalties and state, in part, the following:

Water Code section 13385, subdivision (h)(1), states:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this division, and except as provided in subdivisions (j), (k), and (l), a mandatory minimum penalty of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) shall be assessed for each serious violation.

Water Code section 13385, subdivision (h)(2), states:

For the purposes of this section, a "serious violation" means any waste discharge that violates the effluent limitations contained in the applicable waste discharge requirements for a Group II pollutant, as specified in Appendix A to Section 123.45 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, by 20 percent or more or for a Group I pollutant, as specified in Appendix A to Section 123.45 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, by 40 percent or more.

Water Code section 13385, subdivision (i)(1), states, in part:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this division, and except as provided in subdivisions (j), (k), and (l), a mandatory minimum penalty of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) shall be assessed for each violation whenever the person does any of the following four or more times in any period of six consecutive months, except that the requirement to assess the mandatory minimum penalty shall not be applicable to the first three violations:

- A) Violates a waste discharge requirement effluent limitation.
- B) Fails to file a report pursuant to Section 13260.
- C) Files an incomplete report pursuant to Section 13260.
- D) Violates a toxicity effluent limitation contained in the applicable waste discharge requirements where the waste discharge requirements do not contain pollutant-specific effluent limitations for toxic pollutants.

7. Water Code section 13323 states, in part:

Any executive officer of a regional board may issue a complaint to any person on whom administrative civil liability may be imposed pursuant to this article. The complaint shall allege the act or failure to act that constitutes a violation of law, the provision authorizing civil liability to be imposed pursuant to this article, and the proposed civil liability.

8. Water Code section 13385, subdivision (j), exempts certain violations from MMPs, and states, in relevant part:

Subdivisions (h) and (i) do not apply to any of the following:

- 3) A violation of an effluent limitation where the waste discharge is in compliance with either a cease and desist order issued pursuant to Section 13301 or a time schedule

order issued pursuant to Section 13300 or 13308 if all of the following requirements are met:

- C) The regional board establishes a time schedule for bringing the waste discharge into compliance with the effluent limitation that is as short as possible....For the purposes of this subdivision, the time schedule may not exceed five years in length The interim requirements shall include both of the following:
 - i) Effluent limitations for the pollutant or pollutants of concern.
 - ii) Actions and milestones leading to compliance with the effluent limitation.

9. WDRs Order R5-2012-0034 Effluent Limitations IV.A.2.a., include, in part, the following effluent limitations:

- a. **Effective 31 December 2012**, the Discharger shall maintain compliance with the following effluent limitations at Discharge Points Nos. 001 or 002...

Table 7. Effluent Limitations – Discharge Point No. 001 and 002 (5.0 MGD)

| Parameter | Units | Effluent Limitations | | |
|--|-------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | Average Monthly | Average Weekly | Maximum Daily |
| Biochemical Oxygen Demand (5-day @ 20°C) | mg/L | 10 | 15 | 20 |

10. WDRs Order R5-2012-0034 Effluent Limitations IV.A.2.e., include, in part, the following effluent limitations:

- e. Total Coliform Organisms. Effluent total coliform organisms shall not exceed:
 - i. 2.2 most probable number (MPN) per 100 mL, as a 7-day median;
 - ii. 23 MPN/100 mL, more than once in any 30-day period; and
 - iii. 240 MPN/100 mL, at any time.

11. According to the Discharger’s self-monitoring reports, the Discharger committed eight (8) non-serious violations of the above effluent limitations contained in WDRs Order R5-2012-0034, as shown in Attachment A. All of these violations are subject to mandatory penalties under Water Code section 13385 subdivision (i)(1) because these violations were preceded by three or more similar violations within a six-month period. The mandatory minimum penalty for these non-serious violations is **twenty four thousand dollars (\$24,000)**.

12. The total amount of the mandatory penalties assessed for the alleged effluent violations is **twenty four thousand dollars (\$24,000)**. As stated herein, a detailed list of the alleged effluent violations is included in Attachment A. This Complaint addresses administrative civil liability for violations that are specifically identified in Attachment A as subject to mandatory minimum penalties.

13. On 14 February 2014, the Executive Officer designated Andrew Altevogt, Assistant Executive Officer, as the Lead Prosecution Officer for all enforcement matters originating in the Central Valley Region. The 14 February 2014 Delegation of Authority also authorizes Andrew Altevogt to issue Administrative Civil Liability Complaints.

14. Issuance of this Administrative Civil Liability Complaint to enforce Water Code Division 7, Chapter 5.5 is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code section 21000 et seq.), in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15321(a)(2).

THE LINDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT IS HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE THAT:

1. The Assistant Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board proposes that the Discharger be assessed an administrative civil liability in the amount of **twenty four thousand dollars (\$24,000)**.
2. A hearing on this matter will be held at the Central Valley Water Board meeting scheduled for **23/24 June 2016**, unless the Discharger does one of the following by **27 April 2016**:
 - a) Waives the hearing by completing the attached form (checking off the box next to Option 1) and returning it to the Central Valley Water Board. In addition, submits payment for the proposed civil liability of **twenty four thousand dollars (\$24,000)** to the State Water Board, with a copy of the check to the Central Valley Water Board; or
 - b) Requests to engage in settlement discussions by checking the box next to Option 2 on the attached form, and returning it to the Board along with a letter describing the issues to be discussed. The Central Valley Water Board must agree to the postponement; or
 - c) Requests to delay the hearing by checking off the box next to Option 3 on the attached form, and returning it to the Board along with a letter describing the proposed length of delay and the issues to be discussed. The Central Valley Water Board must agree to the postponement.
3. If a hearing on this matter is held, the Central Valley Water Board will consider whether to affirm, reject, or modify the proposed administrative civil liability, or whether to refer the matter to the Attorney General for recovery of judicial civil liability.
4. If this matter proceeds to hearing, the Assistant Executive Officer reserves the right to amend the proposed amount of civil liability to conform to the evidence presented, including but not limited to, increasing the proposed amount to account for the costs of enforcement (including staff, legal and expert witness costs) incurred after the date of the issuance of this Complaint through completion of the hearing.

Original signed by

ANDREW ALTEVOGT, Assistant Executive Officer

28 March 2016

**WAIVER FORM
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINT**

By signing this waiver, I affirm and acknowledge the following:

I am duly authorized to represent the Linda County Water District (hereafter Discharger) in connection with Administrative Civil Liability Complaint R5-2016-0517 (hereafter Complaint). I am informed that California Water Code section 13323, subdivision (b), states that, "a hearing before the regional board shall be conducted within 90 days after the party has been served. The person who has been issued a complaint may waive the right to a hearing."

(OPTION 1: Check here if the Discharger waives the hearing requirement and will pay in full.)

- a. I hereby waive any right the Discharger may have to a hearing before the Central Valley Water Board.
- b. I certify that the Discharger will remit payment for the proposed civil liability in the full amount of **twenty four thousand dollars (\$24,000)** by check that references "ACL Complaint R5-2016-0517" made payable to the *State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account*. Payment must be received by the State Water Resources Control Board, Accounting Office, Attn: ACL Payment at PO Box 1888, Sacramento, California, 95812-1888 by **27 April 2016**. The waiver and a copy of the check must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board, Attn: Wendy Wyels, at 11020 Sun Center Drive #200, Rancho Cordova, California, 95670 by **27 April 2016**.
- c. I understand the payment of the above amount constitutes a proposed settlement of the Complaint, and that any settlement will not become final until after a 30-day public notice and comment period. Should the Central Valley Water Board receive significant new information or comments during this comment period, the Central Valley Water Board's Assistant Executive Officer may withdraw the complaint, return payment, and issue a new complaint. I also understand that approval of the settlement will result in the Discharger having waived the right to contest the allegations in the Complaint and the imposition of civil liability.
- d. I understand that payment of the above amount is not a substitute for compliance with applicable laws and that continuing violations of the type alleged in the Complaint may subject the Discharger to further enforcement, including additional civil liability.

(OPTION 2: Check here if the Discharger waives the 90-day hearing requirement in order to engage in settlement discussions.) I hereby waive any right the Discharger may have to a hearing before the Central Valley Water Board within 90 days after service of the complaint, but I reserve the ability to request a hearing in the future. I certify that the Discharger will promptly engage the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team in settlement discussions to attempt to resolve the outstanding violation(s). By checking this box, the Discharger requests that the Central Valley Water Board delay the hearing so that the Discharger and the Prosecution Team can discuss settlement. It remains within the discretion of the Central Valley Water Board to agree to delay the hearing. Any proposed settlement is subject to the conditions described above under "Option 1."

(OPTION 3: Check here if the Discharger waives the 90-day hearing requirement in order to extend the hearing date and/or hearing deadlines. Attach a separate sheet with the amount of additional time requested and the rationale.) I hereby waive any right the Discharger may have to a hearing before the Central Valley Water Board within 90 days after service of the complaint. By checking this box, the Discharger requests that the Central Valley Water Board delay the hearing and/or hearing deadlines so that the Discharger may have additional time to prepare for the hearing. It remains within the discretion of the Central Valley Water Board to approve the extension.

(Print Name and Title)

(Signature)

(Date)

**ATTACHMENT A
RECORD OF VIOLATIONS FOR ASSESSING MANDATORY MINIMUM PENALTIES**

**LINDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT**

RECORD OF VIOLATIONS (1 July 2015 – 31 December 2015) MANDATORY PENALTIES
(Data reported under Monitoring and Reporting Program R5-2012-0034)

| | <u>Date</u> | <u>Parameter</u> | <u>Units</u> | <u>WDRs Limit</u> | <u>Measured</u> | <u>Period</u> | <u>Remarks</u> | <u>CIWQS</u> |
|---|-------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| * | 9-Apr-15 | Ammonia, Total Recoverable | mg/L | 3.5 | 5.6 | Maximum Daily | 1* | 991164 |
| * | 15-Apr-15 | Ammonia, Total Recoverable | mg/L | 3.5 | 4.1 | Maximum Daily | 4* | 991166 |
| * | 30-Apr-15 | Ammonia, Total Recoverable | mg/L | 2.4 | 2.9 | Average Monthly | 4* | 991165 |
| 1 | 23-July-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 240 | 540 | Instantaneous Maximum | 4 | 994290 |
| 2 | 12-Aug-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 2.2 | 4.5 | 7-day Median | 4 | 996506 |
| 3 | 13-Aug-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 2.2 | 7.8 | 7-day Median | 4 | 996502 |
| 4 | 18-Aug-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 2.2 | 130 | 7-day Median | 4 | 996505 |
| 5 | 18-Aug-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 240 | 540 | Instantaneous Maximum | 4 | 996502 |
| 6 | 18-Aug-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 23 | 540 | (1) | 4 | 996502 |
| 7 | 19-Aug-15 | Total Coliform Organisms | MPN/ 100 mL | 2.2 | 7.8 | 7-day Median | 4 | 996503 |
| 8 | 2-Nov-15 | Biochemical Oxygen Demand | mg/L | 20 | 21 | Daily Maximum | 4 | 1000893 |

(1) WDRs section IV.A.2.e.ii states that total coliform organisms shall not exceed "...23 MPN/100 mL, more than once in any 30-day period." The sample reported on 8/18/2015 was the second exceedance of 23 MPN/100 mL in that 30-day period.

* Supporting violations addressed in ACLC R5-2015-0532.

Remarks:

1. Serious Violation: For Group I pollutants that exceed the effluent limitation by 40 percent or more.
2. Serious Violation: For Group II pollutants that exceed the effluent limitation by 20 percent or more.
3. Non-serious violation falls within the first three violations in a 180-day period, thus is not subject to mandatory minimum penalties. Penalties that may be assessed for this violation are discretionary. This violation is not addressed or resolved in this ROV.
4. Non-serious violation subject to mandatory minimum penalties.

| | | |
|--|--|------------------------|
| | <u>VIOLATIONS AS OF:</u> | <u>12/31/15</u> |
| | Group I Serious Violations: | 0 |
| | Group II Serious Violations: | 0 |
| | Non-Serious Violations Not Subject to MMPs: | 0 |
| | <u>Non-serious Violations Subject to MMPs:</u> | <u>8</u> |
| | Total Violations Subject to MMPs: | 8 |

Mandatory Minimum Penalty = (8 Non-serious Violations) x \$3,000 = \$24,000