

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
4/5 June 2015 Board Meeting

Response to Comments  
for the  
Donner Summit Public Utility District  
Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Tentative NPDES Permit Renewal

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The following are Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board) staff responses to comments submitted by interested parties regarding the tentative Waste Discharge Requirements for NPDES Permit No. CA0081621 (Order) renewal for the Donner Summit Public Utility District (Discharger), Donner Summit Public Utility District Wastewater Treatment Plant (Facility).

The tentative Order was issued for a 30-day public comment period on 27 March 2015 and comments were due 27 April 2015. The Central Valley Water Board received public comments regarding the tentative Order by the due date from the following:

- Discharger
- Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA)
- South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)

Changes were made to the tentative Order based on public comments received. The submitted comments were accepted into the record, and are summarized below, followed by Central Valley Water Board staff responses.

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## **DISCHARGER COMMENTS**

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### **Discharger Comment 1. Editorial**

The Discharger noticed that in section II, of the Fact Sheet in the tentative Order, the Facility Description includes “Sierra Lakes Community Water District” and it should be “Sierra Lakes County Water District”.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs and the correction has been made to the proposed Order.

### **Discharger Comment 2. Land Irrigation Discharge Prohibition**

The Discharger comments that the discharge prohibition (section III.C) regarding land irrigation should be removed from the tentative Order. The Discharger is prohibited from discharging treated wastewater to land as irrigation from 1 November to 30 June as part of the Discharger’s lease agreement with the land owner. The Discharger states that it is not appropriate for the Regional Water Board to regulate a lease agreement restriction as part of the NPDES Permit. In addition, the Discharger is currently negotiating with the land owner to have the restriction removed from the lease agreement to allow the Discharger to maximize land application flexibility.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs. The prohibition to discharge wastewater to land irrigation from 1 November to 30 June has been removed from the proposed Order.

### **Discharger Comment 3. Total Coliform Compliance Determination**

The Discharger suggested that the total coliform organisms compliance determination language (section VII.C) in the tentative Order should be replaced with the tertiary language specified in Title 22, section 60301.230(b), since the Discharger is pursuing a recycled water use for snowmaking.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs in part. The Title 22, section 60301.230(b), requirements are included in the tentative Order under the Recycling Specifications-Snowmaking, section IV.C, and apply to discharges when snowmaking occurs. The compliance determination language in section VII.C of the tentative Order is for discharges to surface water. Additional wording has been added to section VII.C of the proposed Order for clarification, as shown in underline/strikeout format below:

**Total Coliform Organisms Effluent Limitations (Section IV.A.1.e).** When discharging to the South Yuba River, ~~f~~For each day that an effluent sample is collected and analyzed for total coliform organisms, the 7-day median shall be determined by calculating the median concentration of total coliform bacteria in the effluent utilizing the bacteriological results of the last 7 days. For example, if a sample is collected on a Wednesday, the result from that sampling event and all results from the previous 6 days (i.e., Tuesday, Monday, Sunday, Saturday, Friday, and Thursday) are used to calculate the 7-day median. If the 7-day median of total coliform organisms exceeds a most probable number (MPN) of 2.2 per 100 milliliters, the Discharger will be considered out of compliance.

### **Discharger Comment 4. Total Coliform Monitoring Frequency**

The Discharger comments that per the requirements of Title 22, section 60321(a), daily monitoring of total coliform organisms is required when discharging to REC-001 for snowmaking. The tentative Order includes monitoring five times per week.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs. The monitoring frequency for total coliform organisms has been corrected in the proposed Order (Table E-6, section VII.A.1, Attachment E, Monitoring and Reporting Program) to require monitoring daily, when discharging to REC-001.

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## **CVCWA COMMENTS**

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### **CVCWA Comment I. Mixing Zone Discussion**

CVCWA requested that the precondition for installing a new diffuser prior to initiating a mixing zone study be removed from the tentative Order. The tentative Order requires the Discharger to replace its existing diffuser with a new diffuser designed to rapidly and completely mix the

effluent and receiving water prior to pursuing dilution and conducting a mixing zone study. CVCWA affirms that these requirements are not consistent with the *Policy for Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California* (SIP).

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs. The proposed Order should not require installation of a new diffuser designed for complete mixing prior to approval of a work plan and mixing zone study. Therefore, the requirement to install a new diffuser that will completely mix the effluent and receiving water prior to submitting a work plan has been removed from the proposed Order.

### **CVCWA Comment II. Salinity Plan Requirement**

CVCWA requested that the salinity plan requirement language be revised to clarify the intent of the annual reporting regarding the salinity evaluation and minimization plan (Plan). CVCWA claims that the tentative Order implies that the District must show reductions in salinity in order to comply with this requirement, but rather the annual reporting is to show that the Discharger is continuing to implement measures that identify and address salinity according to the Plan.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs that showing a reduction in salinity is not the purpose of the annual reports. The annual reports should show that continuing to implement the plan is effective at maintaining water quality objectives. Therefore, the language in section VI.C.3.a in the proposed Order has been revised as shown in underline/strikeout format below and throughout the proposed Order as appropriate:

**Salinity Evaluation and Minimization Plan.** The Discharger shall ~~update and~~ continue to implement a salinity evaluation and minimization plan to ~~identify and~~ address sources of salinity from the Facility. ~~The updated plan shall be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board within 9 months of the effective date of this Order.~~ The Discharger shall provide annual reports discussing the effectiveness of implementing the salinity evaluation and minimization plan, changes in the salinity in the effluent discharge if it is increasing and if any changes to the plan are needed to address this increase. If the plan is updated, it shall be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board within 12 months of the annual report. ~~demonstrating reasonable progress in the reduction of salinity in its discharge to the South Yuba River.~~ The annual reports shall be submitted in accordance with the Monitoring and Reporting Program (Attachment E, section X.D.1).

### **CVCWA Comment III. Wet Weather Compliance Language for Mass Limitations**

CVCWA commented that some typical language regarding compliance with mass effluent limitations is missing from section VII.D of the tentative Order and requested that the language be added to account wet weather flow.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs. Additional language has been added to clarify how compliance with mass effluent limitations will be determined. The following language was added to section VII.D:

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If the effluent flow exceeds the permitted average dry weather flow during wet-weather seasons, the effluent mass limitations contained in Final Effluent Limitations IV.A.1.a shall not apply. If the effluent flow is below the permitted average dry weather flow during wet-weather seasons, the effluent mass limitations do apply.

#### **CVCWA Comment IV. Land Discharge Specifications**

CVCWA requests that land discharge specification IV.B.6 be deleted to avoid redundant requirements in the permit. CVCWA claims that specification IV.B.6 and specification IV.B.9 are redundant because both specifications concern the prevention of breeding mosquitos.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs in part. Specification IV.B.6 includes measures specifically for ponds and specification IV.B.8 includes measures specifically for irrigation areas, however, both specifications concern the prevention of breeding mosquitos. Therefore, land discharge specification IV.B.6 has been deleted and specification IV.B.8 has been rewritten to avoid redundancy.

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#### **SYRCL COMMENT**

#### **SYRCL Comment. Land Irrigation Discharge Prohibition**

SYRCL requested that discharge of treated wastewater to land irrigation occur as early in the year as possible in the interest of protecting the South Yuba River during summer low flows. SYRCL would like the discharge prohibition to land irrigation reviewed to ensure that it is not an unnecessary or counter-productive restraint to allowing the Discharger the flexibility to use land irrigation, especially before June 30 and during drought years.

**RESPONSE:** Board staff concurs and the discharge prohibition for land irrigation has been removed; See also staff response above to Discharger Comment 2.