

## **Item 16, Supporting Document 16**

### **Recent Sanitary Sewer Overflows (*Mark Alpert*)**

During the period between June 2006 and September 2007, the San Diego Region experienced a number of unprecedented large sanitary sewer overflows<sup>1</sup> (SSOs). These spills occurred in and affected all three Counties within the Region and were during a prolonged dry weather period.

The table below lists the spills that were greater than 100,000 gallons and the status of the Regional Boards' enforcement actions related to those spills. The volumes of SSOs were distributed as follows:

- 4 were between 140-160,000 gallons,
- 4 were between 250-400,000 gallons
- 2 were between 600-750,000 gallons, and
- 3 were between 1-14 million gallons.

Complaints for the assessment of Administrative Civil Liability (ACL) were issued for three of the SSOs and hearings on those ACLs are scheduled for the December 12, 2007, Regional Board meeting. Six other SSOs are under investigation by the Regional Board, and recommendations for no further action have been determined for the remainder.

### **Background on History of oversight of SSOs**

The Regional Water Quality Control Board has a long history of taking aggressive action to address SSOs in the San Diego Region. This aggressive response was born out of the Board's deep concern to reduce the number and volume of spills, and to protect water quality, the environment, and public health. In 1996, in response to a serious and growing sewage spill problem the San Diego Regional Board adopted Order No. 96-04 which contains waste discharge requirements (WDR) that required tracking, reporting, and monitoring of sanitary sewer overflows by sewage collection agencies.

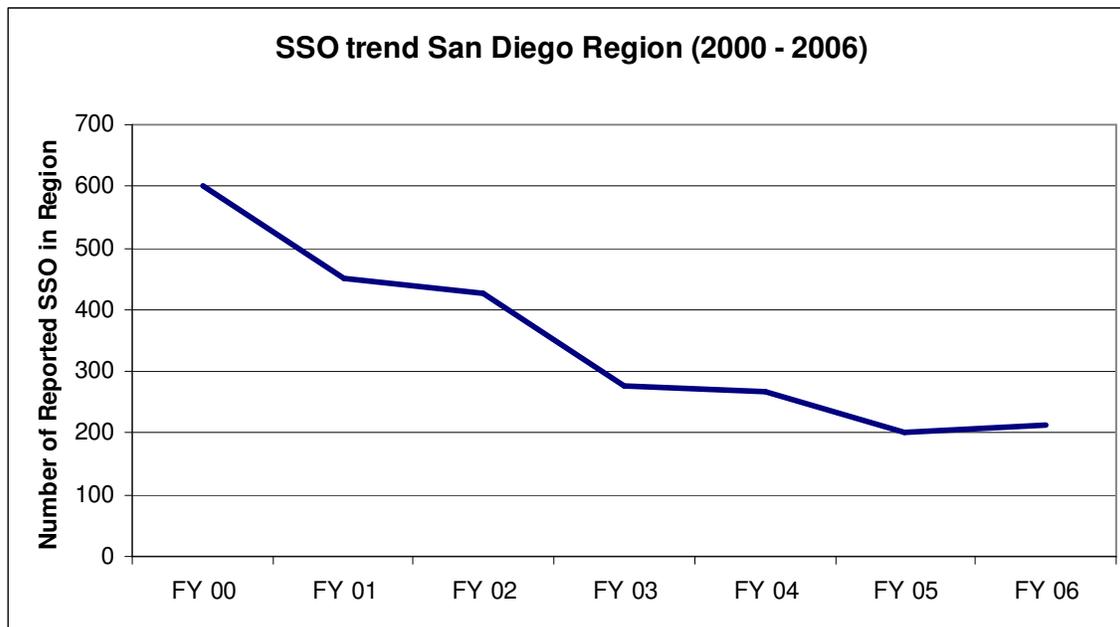
At the time the Regional Board adopted Order 96-04, the San Diego Region was one of only a few regions that regulated public agencies that own and operate sewage collection systems. The vigilance of the Regional Board's oversight of the sewerage agencies has directly contributed to the steep decline in SSOs since the adoption of Order 96-04. The chart below shows the trends in SSOs in the San Diego Region since FY 2000<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) is any overflow, spill, release, discharge or diversion of untreated or partially treated wastewater from a sanitary sewer system. SSOs often contain high levels of suspended solids, pathogenic organisms, toxic pollutants, nutrients, oil, and grease. SSOs pollute surface and ground waters, threaten public health, adversely affect aquatic life, and impair the recreational use and aesthetic enjoyment of surface waters. Typical short-term consequences of SSOs include the closure of beaches and other recreational areas, inundated properties, and polluted rivers and streams.

<sup>2</sup> The fiscal year begins in July and ends in June the following year.

## Item 16, Supporting Document 16



The Regional Board regularly provides a summary of all sanitary sewer overflow data reported by sewer agencies under penalty of perjury in the Executive Officer's Reports [for example; see November EO Report for summary information on SSOs occurring between July 1, 2002 (FY02-03) to October 31, 2007, at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/eo\\_report/eoreport.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/eo_report/eoreport.html) ].

More recently, in 2006, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted a Statewide General WDRs for Sanitary Sewer Systems, (Order No. 2006-0003), and the Regional Board renewed its commitment to effective regional control of SSOs by adopting General WDRs in Order R9-2007-005. In many ways, the statewide Order builds upon the San Diego Regional Board Order 96-04 to require public agencies that own or operate sanitary sewer systems to develop and implement sewer system management plans and report all SSOs to the State Water Board's online SSO database. The Sanitary Sewer Order and its supporting documents can be viewed at the State Board web page at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resdec/wqorders/2006/wqo/wqo2006\\_0003.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resdec/wqorders/2006/wqo/wqo2006_0003.pdf):

**Item 16, Supporting Document 16**

**Table: Status of SSOs >100,000 gallons (June 2006-December 2007)**

| <b>Agency</b>                      | <b>Location</b>        | <b>Date</b>  | <b>Gallons Discharged</b> | <b>Cause</b>                   | <b>Enforcement Action Type</b>                           |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Fallbrook PUD                      | Lake O'Neil            | June-06      | 146,625                   | Blockage (grease and roots)    | ACL complaint  |
| Eastern Municipal Water District   | Murrieta Creek         | November-06  | 1,070,000                 | Undermined during trenching    | ACL complaint  |
| Naval Station Palmer Hall Barracks | Chollas Creek          | November-06  | 14,200,000                | Cross-connection               | Under investigation                                      |
| Fallbrook PUD                      | Los Jilgueros Preserve | March-07     | 143,889                   | Undermined sewer line          | Further Enforcement Action not recommended at this time* |
| MCB Camp Pendleton                 | Santa Margarita River  | March-07     | 250,000                   | Cross-connection               | Under investigation                                      |
| Cities of Vista and Carlsbad       | Buena Vista Lagoon     | April-07     | 7,300,000                 | External corrosion             | ACL complaint  |
| City of Vista                      | Agua Hedionda Creek    | April-07     | 411,000                   | External corrosion             | Further Enforcement Action not recommended at this time* |
| Santa Margarita WD                 | San Juan Creek         | April-07     | 392,000                   | Equipment failure              | Under investigation                                      |
| Rancho California WD               | Murrieta Creek         | May-07       | 157,500                   | Vandalism                      | Further Enforcement Action not recommended at this time* |
| Otay WD                            | Fenton Business Park   | August-07    | ???                       | Cross-connection               | Under investigation                                      |
| City of San Diego                  | Lake Hodges            | September-07 | 390,720                   | Blockage (mop head and grease) | Under investigation                                      |
| Rainbow MUD                        | Horse Ranch Creek      | September-07 | 756,000                   | Blockage (roots & debris)      | Under investigation                                      |

\*SSO did not reach surface waters and/or was substantially cleaned up