

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN DIEGO REGION**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
December 14, 2022**

**ITEM 4**

**SUBJECT**

Informational Item: State of the Ocean Report by the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority and the City of Escondido on Status and Trends of Water Quality Conditions in the Vicinity of the San Elijo Ocean Outfall (Joann Lim)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

This is for an informational item and the Board will not take an action.

**KEY ISSUE**

The San Elijo Joint Powers Authority (SEJPA) and the City of Escondido (City) (collectively referred to as Dischargers) will provide the San Diego Water Board with a joint assessment of the state of San Diego County coastal waters in the vicinity of the San Elijo Ocean Outfall (SEOO). The Dischargers' "State of the Ocean" assessment report presentation is required to be provided to the San Diego Water Board once during the 5-year term of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for the SEOO discharge. This presentation is required in the Monitoring and Reporting Programs (MRPs) of the NPDES the permits for the SEJPA's San Elijo Water Reclamation Plant<sup>1</sup> and the City's Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility<sup>2</sup>.

**PRACTICAL VISION**

This informational item is consistent with the Monitoring and Assessment chapter of the Practical Vision.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the State of the Ocean Report is to communicate findings and conclusions transparently and effectively from the ocean monitoring programs conducted in accordance with NPDES permit requirements to assess the impact of wastewater discharged through the SEOO on the coastal marine environment in the vicinity of the SEOO.

**DISCUSSION**

The Dischargers conduct an extensive ocean monitoring program to evaluate potential environmental effects associated with the discharge of treated wastewater to the Pacific Ocean through the SEOO. The data collected is used to determine compliance with receiving water conditions specified in the Dischargers' NPDES permits.

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<sup>1</sup> Order No. R9-2018-0003, NPDES No. CA0107999, *Waste Discharge Requirements for The San Elijo Joint Powers Authority, San Elijo Water Reclamation Facility Discharge to the Pacific Ocean through the San Elijo Ocean Outfall* (San Elijo Permit)

<sup>2</sup> Order No. R9-2018-0002, NPDES No. CA0107981, *Waste Discharge Requirements for the City of Escondido, Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility and Membrane Filtration/Reverse Osmosis Facility Discharge to the Pacific Ocean through the San Elijo Ocean Outfall* (Escondido Permit)

<sup>3</sup> The San Diego Water Board Practical Vision is available at:

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water\\_issues/programs/practical\\_vision/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/practical_vision/)

Since treated effluent from the San Elijo Water Reclamation Plant and the Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility commingle before discharging to the ocean through the SEOO, a joint ocean monitoring program approved by the San Diego Water Board is conducted to comply with the NPDES permits. The permits require SEJPA and the City to conduct ocean water monitoring for the SEOO in a monitoring area spanning approximately 6.9 square miles of coastal marine waters from San Elijo State Beach to the Del Mar Fairgrounds (**Supporting Document No. 1**).

Core routine monitoring for the SEOO is conducted at 8 surf zone stations (weekly), 7 near shore stations (quarterly), and 7 offshore stations (quarterly) for the parameters specified in the MRPs. In addition to core routine monitoring, once during the permit term, the Dischargers are required to conduct benthic monitoring at the 7 offshore stations (monitoring stations A14S, A4S, A2S, A1S, A0.5S, A1N, and A2N); demersal fish and macroinvertebrate diver surveys at the 20-, 40-, 60-, and 80-foot depth contours at 3 biological transects (biological transect stations T0.5S, T4S, and T14S); and fish tissue monitoring at 3 rig fishing zones (rig fishing stations RF8S, RF, and RF8N).

The Dischargers are also periodically asked to participate along with other dischargers in the Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program coordinated by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). As part of the Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program, a portion of the Dischargers' receiving water sampling and analytical effort described above is reallocated to provide a regional assessment of the impact of the discharge of municipal wastewater to the Southern California Bight.

The main objectives of the ocean monitoring program are to: 1) provide data that satisfy NPDES permit requirements, 2) demonstrate compliance with NPDES permit receiving water limitations including California Ocean Plan water-contact bacteriological standards in State of California waters, 3) track movement and dispersion of the wastewater fields or plumes discharged through the outfalls, and 4) identify any biological or chemical changes that may be associated with wastewater discharge. These data are used to evaluate and document any effects of wastewater discharge, other anthropogenic influences (e.g., stormwater discharge, urban runoff), or natural factors (e.g., climate changes) on coastal water quality, seafloor sediment conditions, and local marine organisms.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice of the opportunity to comment on this informational item was posted on the San Diego Water Board website and sent to all known interested persons by email on November 10, 2022 (**Supporting Document No. 2**). Notice was also provided in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the December 14, 2022, Board meeting, which was posted on the San Diego Water Board website.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

1. Receiving Water Monitoring Stations for the San Elijo Ocean Outfall
2. Notice of Opportunity to Comment