

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc, Hilmar Cheese Processing Plant, Merced County – *Status Report on Processing Plant Improvements* [Lonnie Wass (559) 445-6051].

BOARD ACTION: None: Informational item only.

BACKGROUND: Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc. (Hilmar Cheese) owns and operates a Cheese Processing Plant about one-half mile north of the unincorporated community of Hilmar. Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order R5-2010-0008 regulates discharges from the facility to farm land. Past discharges of high-strength wastes degraded and/or polluted groundwater with salts, organics, and iron and manganese. The Board has taken enforcement actions against Hilmar Cheese for these discharges, which included the imposition of administrative civil liability and the issuance of a cleanup and abatement order and a time schedule order (TSO). The Board issued the TSO concurrently with WDRs Order R5-2010-0008 to establish a time schedule for Hilmar Cheese to increase the treatment of its discharge. Pursuant to the TSO, Hilmar Cheese installed additional treatment technologies and greatly improved the quality of its discharge. Effluent quality is now comparable to that of local groundwater, and the effluent is recycled on area crops. Because of the improvements made by Hilmar Cheese, the Board rescinded the TSO in March of 2012. Groundwater impacts associated with historic discharges continue to be regulated under Cleanup and Abatement Order R5-2004-0722.

The purpose of this item is to provide the Board a more detailed update of the progress Hilmar Cheese Company has made since the issuance of WDRs Order R5-2010-0008 and TSO R5-2010-0009

RECOMMENDATION: Unless directed otherwise by the Board, staff is not proposing any specific actions at this time, but will continue to monitor Hilmar Cheese's progress and compliance.