

ITEM: 22

SUBJECT: Paramount Farms International, LLC, El Dorado Pistachio Processing Plant, and Paramount Farming Company, LLC  
Fresno County

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Resolution approving an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Consideration of Waste Discharge Requirements (revised)*

BACKGROUND: Paramount Farms International, LLC (Paramount) owns and operates a Pistachio Processing Plant (Plant) near Coalinga in Fresno County, where it processes, stores, and sorts pistachio nuts. The Plant is currently regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order 97-131. In 2010, Paramount submitted a Report of Waste Discharge to increase flows, and expand its land application area. The increased flows will improve hulling operations and provide for better quality control within the Plant. No increase in production capacity is proposed.

To handle the increased flows, Paramount plans to expand its land application area to include approximately 600 acres of pistachio trees on land owned by Paramount Farming Company, LLC.

The WDRs limits the seasonal average flow to 1 mgd; sets a maximum daily flow of 2.5 mgd; and sets an annual flow of 42 million gallons. The WDRs also set a cycle average BOD loading limit of 100 lbs/acre/day, and require nitrogen and hydraulic loading be at agronomic rates. In addition to the WDRs, staff prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the project to comply with CEQA.

Staff addressed written comments from Paramount, making minor changes to the WDRs, including holding flows to current limits of 0.35 mgd (average) and 0.45 mgd (maximum) until completion of the irrigation line to send wastewater to the new land application areas, with a time schedule to complete the installation. Staff also prepared an Addendum to the Initial Study to provide minor clarifications.

Remaining issues are from comments made by Ms. Kathy Kinsland that pertain to the authority of the Board to act as lead agency for CEQA and impose mitigation measures beyond those required to protect water quality. Board staff has prepared responses to Ms. Kinsland's arguments that point out inaccuracies in her statements.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Board adopt the Resolution approving the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and issue the Waste Discharge Requirements.

Mgmt. Review \_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Review PEP  
5/6 December 2013

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