

**Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
Board Meeting – 10-11 December 2015**

**Response to Written Comments for
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
California Department of Forestry Fire Academy
Mule Creek State Prison Wastewater Treatment Plant**

At a public hearing scheduled for 10 and 11 December 2015, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) will consider adoption of Waste Discharge Requirements (“WDRs”) for the Mule Creek State Prison Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). This document contains responses to written comments received regarding the tentative WDRs. Written comments were required by public notice to be received by the Central Valley Water Board by close of business on 21 October 2015 to receive full consideration. Comments were received from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Central Valley Clean Water Association.

Written comments are summarized below, followed by the responses of Central Valley Water Board staff. Based on the comments, Central Valley Water Board staff made some changes to the tentative WDRs. Central Valley Water Board staff also made some changes to correct typographical errors and to improve clarity.

CA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION COMMENTS

On 21 October 2014, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) submitted written comments regarding the tentative WDRs. RMCSA’s comments identified some issues and requested certain editorial changes to the tentative WDRs. Several of the requested changes were made, as appropriate, and CDCR concurs with the revised WDRs. The resolution of key issues is summarized below.

CDCR Comment No. 1: CDCR requested that Effluent Limitation C.2 be revised to include an allowance for soil denitrification as justified by available literature or a site specific study or characterization

RESPONSE: No changes were made. Denitrification can be addressed as part of an evaluation of nitrogen contributed from other sources.

CDCR Comment No. 2: CDCR requested that Land Application Area Specification F.3 be revised to allow discharge of tailwater from LAA Number 8 into Preston Reservoir.

RESPONSE: No changes were made. Tailwater may contain some degree of organic matter or nitrates or metals from the soil. Therefore, tailwater from any land application area is not representative of the wastewater quality existing from the chlorine contact pipe.

CDCR Comment No. 3: CDCR requested that Land Application Area Specification F.4

RESPONSE: No changes were made. See response to CDCR Comment 2 above.

CENTRAL VALLEY CLEAN WATER ASSOCIATION COMMENTS

On 20 October 2015, the Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA) submitted written comments regarding the tentative WDRs. CVCWA's comments identified some issues and requested certain changes to the tentative WDRs. Some of the changes were made as requested and some were not.

CVCWA Comment No. 1: CVCWA stated that the Tentative Order includes land discharge specifications for spray irrigation of secondary disinfected effluent on land application areas (LAAs) that are not based on the criteria in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (Title 22), are more stringent than those criteria, or do not provide the necessary qualifications. Specifically, Land Application Area Specification F.8 provides setback requirements for the LAAs, including:

- Minimum 25 feet from the edge of the LAAs to property boundaries;
- Minimum 30 feet from the edge of the LAAs to a public road right of way;
- Minimum 50 feet from the edge of the LAAs to manmade or natural surface water drainage course;
- Minimum 100 feet from the edge of the LAAs to domestic water supply wells;
- Minimum 100 feet from the edge of the LAAs to residence; and
- Minimum 100 feet from the edge of the LAAs to public areas like playgrounds and school yards.

CVCWA requests that the specifications that are not part of Title 22 be deleted from the Tentative Order.

RESPONSE: The land application area specifications include applicable criteria from Title 22 and other requirements as necessary to protect the health of neighbors and to prevent pollution of nearby waterways. It is both appropriate and the Board's longstanding practice to impose certain requirements that may be more stringent than the Title 22 regulations as needed to implement the Basin Plan. Land Application Area Specification F.8 was amended to specify setbacks are not specifically mandated by Title 22 and are necessary to protect the health of neighbors and to prevent pollution of nearby waterways."

CVCWA Comment No. 2: CVCWA stated that Effluent Limitation C.1 of the Tentative Order, which proposes a total nitrogen effluent limitation of 20 mg/L as an annual average, is inappropriate. There is a primary maximum contaminant level (MCL) for nitrate, but no water quality objective for total nitrogen. The proposed limit is not consistent with any adopted water quality objective or known criteria. Total nitrogen is also different and distinguishable from nitrate, and setting an effluent limit for total nitrogen will not necessarily translate to obtaining the target nitrate levels. CVCWA requests that the effluent limitation for total nitrogen be removed from the Tentative Order.

RESPONSE: The effluent limit for total nitrogen has been deleted and replaced with an effluent limit for nitrate set at 20 mg/L as an annual average.