

Heal the Bay

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January 27, 2017

Mazhar Ali
320 West 4th St., Suite 200
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VIA EMAIL

Re: Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit for the City of Redondo Beach – Seaside Lagoon (NPDES No. CA0064297, CI No. 8034)

Dear Mr. Ali,

On behalf of Heal the Bay, we submit the following comments on the *Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit for the City of Redondo Beach – Seaside Lagoon* (Tentative WDR). Heal the Bay is an environmental organization with over 15,000 members dedicated to making the coastal waters and watersheds of greater Los Angeles safe, healthy, and clean. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this Tentative WDR.

Heal the Bay understands that the City of Redondo Beach has a somewhat precarious situation on their hands with their continued operation of Seaside Lagoon. Over the summers of 2014 and 2015 the water park has had effluent limitation exceedances 21 times, in pollutants ranging from *Enterococcus* to chlorine. We also understand that the source water for Seaside Lagoon, Kings Harbor, already has pollutant exceedances.¹

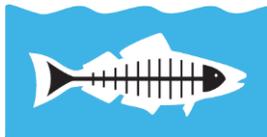
Regardless, since 1999, the City of Redondo Beach has had Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) constituent exceedance fines totaling \$195,000.² While Heal the Bay has no desire to see the City get hit with more fines, it must be noted that the fines in themselves seem to have little effect with accomplishing what their intended goal is: to keep Seaside Lagoon in compliance. Moreover, these exceedances occur at the key times of the year when locals and tourists are using the recreational

¹ City of Redondo Beach Community Development Department (2016). *The Waterfront: Draft Environmental Impact Report*. p. 3.8-11. Retrieved 1/27/17 from:

http://www.redondo.org/depts/community_development/planning/waterfront_draft_eir/default.asp

² City of Redondo Beach Community Development Department (2016). *The Waterfront: Draft Environmental Impact Report*. p. 3.8-20. Retrieved 1/27/17 from:

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waters surrounding King Harbor the most – in the summer from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

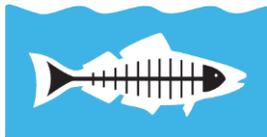
It is known that chlorine is added to the receiving water to make the source water suitable and safe for human contact. If Total Residual Chlorine continues to exceed its limitation quantities, and for some reason is not dechlorinated prior to release into King Harbor receiving water, the quality of the surrounding waters and the aquatic life that makes it their home are likely to suffer.

Heal the Bay holds the propagation of public health to the highest regard, and because of this we feel inclined to comment beyond our environmental concerns over the receiving waters outside Seaside Lagoon. We are concerned about the ramifications of the bacteria ridden waters, despite being chlorinated, present within the Lagoon and are concerned about the hazard to the health of its swimmers. It's hard to see how exceedances of *fecal coliform* bacteria, in one case more than 20 times the permitted receiving water limitation (for Sept 21, 2015 monitoring), isn't harmful to the very young and vulnerable people that the breakwaters of the lagoon borders are seeking to protect. Another question remains, why isn't the added chlorine having an adequate effect on bacteria numbers in the water within Seaside Lagoon?

The degree of exceedance levels during the summer of 2014 and 2015 is distressing. Levels of non-compliance for the third quarter of 2014 and the third quarter of 2015 for "Monthly Average Oil and Grease," with a permit limitation of 10 mg/L were 16 and 17 mg/L respectively. From the same two summers, "Maximum Daily Fecal Coliform," which has a limitation of a most probably number (MPN) of 400, quadrupled from a MPN of 2613 to 8664 per 100ml. "Maximum Daily *Enterococcus*," which has a MPN limit of 104 per 100mL, almost tripled from a MPN high of 712 to 1850 per 100mL. Also both "Maximum Daily Oil and Grease" and "Acute Toxicity" level exceedances first premiered in 2015. The MPN of "Maximum Daily Total Coliform" bacteria had values of 19,863 in 2015 and 24,196 in 2014, are both at least double the permit limitation of 10,000 MPN/100 mL.

If the Regional Board does indeed renew Seaside Lagoon's permit with these Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements, we do have some specific changes to request regarding the tentative permit's Regular Season (Memorial Day to Labor Day) monitoring and reporting program.

Concerning the pollutants classified as "Oil and Grease" we recommend taking grab samples once a week as opposed to once a month. We also urge the Regional Board to increase the frequency of grab samples to be taken of Total Residual Chlorine, *Enterococcus*, Fecal Coliform, and Total Coliform bacteria from once a week to three times a week (Monitoring & Reporting Program, E-6). Due to Seaside Lagoon's history of



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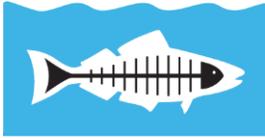
exceedances for these pollutants, it would only work to benefit the receiving waters of King Harbor, as well as park attendees, if park supervisors were to sample more, increase their awareness, and perhaps notice a pattern on when these pollutants are spiking. In addition, if not already present, public notification of bacteria levels within the lagoon should be posted.

Heal the Bay was also curious why the Regional board has pulled future measurements and monitoring for “Ammonia” and “Acute Toxicity” out of the tentative Discharge Requirements. The absence of acute toxicity is particularly troubling because it has a percent single-sample maximum survival rate permit limitation of 70% and was found on the sample date of September 21, 2015 to be a catastrophic 0% survival (Fact Sheet, F-8). We are aware that some monitoring requirements for other dischargers have been modified instead to a Test of Significant Toxicity as a substitute to monitoring for acute toxicity, but could find no evidence for this in the Tentative WDR. We also noticed within the Historic Effluent Data on “Total Suspended Solids,” monitoring data was claimed to be “Not Reported” for the entire permit period of November 2010 to September 2015 (Fact Sheet, F-6). This absence of reporting should be addressed.

Concerning the mechanics of sampling at Discharge Point 001, we appreciate that the Regional Board clarifies multiple times in the permit that effluent samples must be monitored at the discharge manhole only during low-tide conditions. Otherwise, as the permit documents, the discharge will be allowed to mix with receiving waters, adulterating the validity of the measurements.

In Conclusion, Heal the Bay understands that Seaside Lagoon is a valuable source of tourism and has been a long part of Redondo Beach history, dating back to 1963 in its incarnation as Pirates Isle. Still, based on the massive accumulation of violations through the years and having such unreliable and polluted source water, we wonder whether Seaside Lagoon’s existence is tenable. Perhaps the next truly responsible step for the city to take is to use the money that they could be paying for future violations to instead fund a park investment that would make the lagoon structure a truly contained and controlled water park.

Regardless of whether the City of Redondo Beach’s Measure C (which would act to limit further development on Redondo Beach’s Coastal Zones) passes in the upcoming March ballot, the city should be aware of the troubling writing on the wall. In the interest of both the health of families who swim within the park’s waters and the aquatic life who make their home in adjoining Kings Harbor waters, city officials ought to rethink how important a role Seaside Lagoon plays within the overall Redondo Beach community, especially when juxtaposing it with its liability to human and environmental health.



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Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at (310) 451-1500.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Johnson", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Steven Johnson
Water Resources Policy Analyst
Heal the Bay