

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: General Order for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters (General Order)

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Renewal of General Waste Discharge Requirements*

BACKGROUND: Individuals, public agencies, private businesses, and other legal entities often need to discharge relatively pollutant-free wastewater to surface water that poses little or no threat to water quality. Additionally, public and private water suppliers, such as irrigation districts, water districts, and water agencies, may apply for coverage under this General Order for discharges of fresh water due to their intentional and unintentional system operations. Discharges that may be covered by this General Order include, but are not limited to the following:

- Well development water;
- Construction dewatering;
- Pump/well testing;
- Pipeline/tank pressure testing;
- Pipeline/tank flushing or dewatering;
- Condensate discharges;
- Water supply system discharges; and
- Miscellaneous dewatering/low threat discharges.

Upon adoption of the proposed General Order renewal, dischargers that currently hold General Order coverage for current low-threat discharges under the existing General Order will be required to submit a Notice of Intent for Coverage under this renewed Order.

The proposed General Order renewal includes new and/or more stringent requirements than the existing General Order by incorporating requirements of the California Toxic Rule and the State Water Resources Control Board's Implementation of Toxic Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California, 2005 (also referred to as the SIP).

ISSUES: The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), a discharger that holds regulatory coverage under the existing General Order, submitted comments on the tentative General Order issued for public comments on 20 March 2008. The major issue EBMUD raised is summarized below. Further detail on all comments is included in Regional Water Board staff's Responses to Comments:

Total Residual Chlorine: The tentative General Order includes water-quality based effluent limitations for total residual chlorine of 0.011 mg/L as a 4-day average and 0.019 mg/L as a 1-hour average. The limitations are based on USEPA's National Ambient Water Quality Criteria for protection of freshwater aquatic life and the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board's) draft *Total Residual Chlorine and*

*Chlorine-Produced Oxidants Policy of California, (TRC/CPO) policy.* These criteria are used to interpret the Basin Plan's narrative toxicity objective for chlorine.

EBMUD commented that current field analytical methods are not capable of achieving reporting levels at the proposed permitted levels of 0.011 mg/L as a 4-day average and 0.019 mg/L as a 1-hour average, as included in the tentative General Order. EBMUD suggested that the proposed numeric effluent limitations for total residual chlorine be removed and best management practices (BMPs) be required, consistent with the State Water Resources Control Board's TRC/CPO draft policy.

The proposed General Order regulates discharges that are typically monitored with field monitoring equipment. Because available technology for field meters that measure total residual chlorine in the field cannot meet reporting levels in the range of the proposed effluent limitations, EBMUD recommended that the Regional Water Board consider including a reporting level of 0.08 mg/L to demonstrate compliance with effluent limitations, consistent with the reporting level adopted by the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board in its General Order for Discharges from Surface Water Treatment Facilities for Potable Water Supply (Order No. R2-2003-0062, NPDES No. CAG382001). EBMUD also recommended that monitoring for dechlorination agent residual be included in the proposed General Order as an acceptable alternative to monitoring for total residual chlorine.

In response to the EBMUD public comment, an additional monitoring requirement is proposed requiring dischargers to utilize a method capable of achieving a reporting level of 0.08 mg/L, which represents a level that hand-held field meters are capable of achieving. The proposed General Order also includes language that, if the State Water Board adopts a statewide policy with a specified level achievable in the field, those levels will supercede the General Order's 0.08 mg/L reporting level. Compliance determination language for total residual chlorine has been clarified to specify that any quantifiable excursion above the 1-hour average or 4-day average total residual chlorine effluent limitations is a violation. "Quantifiable" means any excursion greater than or equal to a reporting level of 0.08 mg/L, or any more stringent reporting level included in a final statewide policy or standard for total residual chlorine. A reopener has also been added to allow the Regional Water Board to reopen the Order and modify the chlorine residual requirements consistent with a future statewide policy for total residual chlorine.

Mgmt. Review \_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Review \_\_\_\_\_

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
11020 Sun Center Dr., #200  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
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