

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Testing for NPDES Dischargers – Discussion of WET Testing Procedures and Alternatives for NPDES Permits

BOARD ACTION: This item is informational only

BACKGROUND: Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) testing evaluates the toxicity of effluent, and combinations of effluent and receiving water. This item will discuss the issues and concerns, how the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board has been addressing this matter, and what staff proposes to do regarding WET testing.

WET testing is required in most NPDES Permits, but there are issues on how WET testing should be applied. Major issues include:

- Frequency of WET testing.
- Use of receiving water versus lab water for dilutions.
- Which species to use for testing.
- How to determine whether the sample has passed or failed.
- How to respond to a test “failure.”
- How to apply dilution and mixing zones to Whole Effluent Toxicity
- If and when to set narrative or numeric WET effluent limits.

Some of these issues are applied based upon site specific circumstances. For other issues there are USEPA and/or State Water Resources Control Board guidance, regulations, or policy that apply. The State Board issued on 7 July a preliminary draft *Policy for Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Assessment and Control* (attached). This Policy, if adopted, will provide guidance on many of the above issues, and could significantly change how the Central Valley Water Board has been implementing WET testing.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is informational although the Board can provide direction to staff.

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

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