

ITEM: 21

SUBJECT: The Garlic Storage Company, LLC, Waste Discharge Requirements, Shafter Garlic Processing Plant, Kern County

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Waste Discharge Requirements*

BACKGROUND: The Garlic Storage Company, LLC (Discharger), a California-based business, operates the Shafter Garlic Processing Plant (Plant) at 18602 Zerker Road in Shafter, Kern County. The Discharger employs approximately 120 full-time and 100 seasonal employees to process raw garlic into 35 to 50 million pounds per year of peeled garlic cloves, garlic puree, and pickled garlic product. The Discharger also processes 1.5 to 2.5 million pounds of peppers per year. Plant wastewater infrastructure includes a wastewater treatment system (screens and an unlined, aerated pond) and a 16.8-acre wastewater application area (Use Area).

The Discharger has operated the Plant since 1990, never regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements. Central Valley Water Board staff first became aware of the Plant in 1997 when it received nuisance odor complaints. When prompted by staff, the Discharger submitted two Reports of Waste Discharge (RWD), in 1997 and 2001, proposing on-going discharge of high-strength waste to unlined ponds. The Executive Officer issued Monitoring and Reporting Program 5-01-802 in September 2002. In 2006, the Discharger made in-Plant changes to reduce wastewater salinity and submitted an updated RWD for discharge to the 16.8-acre cropped Use Area. Wastewater is still high in salts and nitrogen, with electrical conductivity about 3,000 umhos/cm and total nitrogen over 30 mg/L, on average. The Plant supply well is by far the largest source of wastewater salinity. Groundwater is expected to be of poor quality in the area, but site-specific groundwater conditions are unknown.

The Discharger submitted, on 23 September 2013, another RWD for discharge to a new Use Area south of the Plant. The project requires installation of a pipeline and the City of Shafter is the lead agency for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project under consideration by Shafter also includes another pipeline and new discharge area for a local carrot processor. It is unclear when the CEQA process will be complete. Given the Discharger's history of discharging without requirements, submitting new RWDs for new or changed projects, and the uncertainty of the CEQA schedule for changing the discharge location, staff recommends adoption of the tentative Waste Discharge Requirements, which holds the Discharger to its 2006 RWD. WDRs for the proposed discharge to a different pond and Use Area can be considered once the CEQA process is complete. (SJP)

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the WDRs.

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

Legal Review PEP

5/6 December 2013

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