(9/23/14) Board Meeting
Draft Drinking Water Systems General Permit
Deadline: 8/19/14 by 12:00 noon

ESCONDIDO
City of Choice

RECEIVED
7-2-14
SWRCB Clerk

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 2, 2014

Comment Letter – Draft Drinking Water Systems General Permit and Resolution

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this permit. The City of Escondido will be affected by this permit both as a water supplier and as an entity subject to a Phase I MS4 permit. These comments are being provided from the perspective of a storm drain operator subject to stormwater and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) regulations. We have previously sent comments to Ms. Diana Messina and appreciate her response to our comments.

We understand from Ms. Messina's comments both at the San Diego Workshop (on May 12, 2014) and via email, that the permit allows discharges from drinking water systems to receiving waters and does not assign any right to discharge to a storm drain system. However this is not made clear in the permit. In fact, as the permit exempts dischargers who already have a written agreement with a storm drain operator, then it can be interpreted that coverage under this permit negates any need to have an agreement with the storm drain operator.

We recommend that in section I. SCOPE OF STATEWIDE GENERAL PERMIT AND REQUIREMENT FOR REGULATORY COVERAGE, language be inserted that explains that the intent of the permit is to allow drinking water discharges to receiving waters and does not assign any right to discharge to a storm drain system.

For example at the end of the first paragraph insert: *This permit does not provide any rights to discharge through a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) and the operator of an MS4 should be contacted for permission to discharge through their system. The MS4 operator may impose additional requirements for drinking water discharges through their MS4.*

We appreciate the efforts to help address the issue of discharges where TMDLs are in effect. Although the requirement to sample in Section II is helpful, it does not address our concerns specific to bacteria. Fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) have been shown to be present and capable of reproduction in biofilms within storm drain systems, as these provide conditions for bacteria to thrive (damp and dark). One of the most effective controls of FIB in dry weather conditions is the elimination of dry weather flows. Partly to eliminate the damp conditions for bacteria to survive and reproduce, but also to eliminate the pathway of the FIB from locations within the storm drain system to the receiving water. Discharges of drinking water through the storm drain system, however initially pollutant-free will likely result in the mechanical sloughing of the biofilm where bacteria may be found within the storm drain system and the discharge of FIB into receiving waters. In this case a MS4 operator would as a minimum need to be informed of any

discharges through their system (and as this may explain any FIB peaks in monitoring data), or if FIB in discharges cannot be controlled, prohibit this type of discharge.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments during the adoption process. Please contact me on (760) 839-6315 if you have any questions.

Helen M. Davies

Helen M. Davies
Environmental Programs Manager

c.c., Vasana Vipatapat, Laboratory Superintendent