

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL VALLEY REGION

ORDER NO. R5-2005-0061

SPECIAL ORDER
FOR
CITY OF TAFT, TAFT HEIGHTS SANITATION DISTRICT
FORD CITY SANITATION DISTRICT AND
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
KERN COUNTY
MODIFYING WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS ORDER NO. 5-00-080
AND RESCINDING NPDES PERMIT NO. CA0080161

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, (hereafter Board) finds that:

1. The City of Taft owns and operates a Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) consisting of headworks, four aerated facultative ponds, a chlorine contact basin, one effluent holding pond, solar sludge drying beds, and a 135-acre effluent disposal area (hereafter designated disposal area). The designated disposal area is owned by the United States Department of Energy (USDOE). The WWTF treats municipal wastewater from the City of Taft, Taft Heights Sanitation District, and Ford City Sanitation District, and is in Section 17, T23S, R24E, MDB&M.
2. Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order No. 5-00-080 (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit No. CA0080161), adopted by the Board on 28 April 2000, prescribes requirements for a monthly average dry weather (May through October) discharge flow of 1.5 million gallons per day (mgd) from the WWTF. Discharge is primarily to the designated disposal area, but the order also allows discharge to Sandy Creek, a water of the United States. Since February 1996, there has been no discharge to Sandy Creek.
3. In accordance with the Monitoring and Reporting Program No. 5-00-080 the City performed a soil infiltration rate study. The study confirms the findings of a 1999 Carollo Engineers Report, which found the disposal area adequate to dispose of 1.5 mgd.
4. Area groundwater is at an approximate depth of 350 feet below ground surface and is of poor mineral quality and exhibits EC (conductivity at 25°C) of 4000 to 6000 µmhos/cm. Residential and commercial use groundwater is supplied by West Kern County Water District and is pumped from wells near the Kern River and Elk Hills. Agricultural land use in the general vicinity is limited.
5. Provision F.10 states that WDRs Order No. 5-00-080 expires on 28 April 2005 and requires the City to submit a Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) in application for renewal of waste discharge requirements no later than 180 days in advance of 28 April 2005 if it wishes to continue discharges.
6. On 15 February 2005, the City submitted an RWD for renewal of Order No 5-00-080, but form EPA 3510-2A indicated that it no longer wants the alternative to discharge effluent to

SPECIAL ORDER NO. R5-2005-0061
MODIFYING WDRs ORDER NO. 5-00-080
TAFT WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
KERN COUNTY

-2-

Sandy Creek. Self-monitoring reports submitted by the WWTF document no discharge to Sandy Creek since 1996.

7. All effluent will be disposed of on the 135-acre disposal area. The City reports that it has secured a 10-year lease for use of the designated disposal site from the USDOE. The City further reports that the United States Bureau of Land Management has indicated that it is in the process of acquiring the land from the USDOE with the intention of transferring ownership to the City.
8. WDRs Order No. 5-00-080 is adequate to protect underlying groundwater and preclude nuisance. Given the foregoing, it is reasonable and appropriate to amend the WDRs to withdraw authorization to discharge to Sandy Creek under the NPDES Program and to void or nullify the concomitant effluent discharge limitations, provisions, and monitoring requirements, including Provision F.9, to allow the balance of the requirements to continue in full force.
9. The action to modify WDRs Order No. 5-00-080 to prohibit discharge to Sandy Creek is exempt from the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) in accordance with Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15301 (existing facility).
10. On 28/29 April 2005, after due notice to the City and all other affected persons, the Regional Board conducted a public hearing at which time the Board received all evidence concerning modification of WDRs Order No. 5-00-080.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, pursuant to California Water Code Sections 13263 and 13377, NPDES Permit No. CA0080161 is rescinded and the requirements of WDRs Order No. 5-00-80 are suspended and modified as follows:

1. Discharge to Sandy Creek is prohibited.
2. Discharge Specifications B.2 and B.4 are void.
3. Receiving Water Limitations (Surface Water) are void.
4. Provision F.10 is void.
5. Provision F.1, "Standard Provisions and Reporting Requirements for Waste Discharge Requirements – NPDES, March 1991 " shall be replaced by "Standard Provisions and Reporting Requirements for Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Land, March 1991," attached hereto.
6. "Discharge 001 Monitoring" and "Receiving Water Monitoring" sections of Monitoring and Reporting Program No. 5-00-080 are void.

SPECIAL ORDER NO. R5-2005-0061
MODIFYING WDRs ORDER NO. 5-00-080
TAFT WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
KERN COUNTY

-3-

I, THOMAS R. PINKOS, Executive Officer, do hereby certify the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of an Order adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, on 29 April 2005.

THOMAS R. PINKOS, Executive Officer

JE: 4/29/05