



California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Coast Region



Linda S. Adams.
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

895 Acrovista Place, Suite 101, San Luis Obispo, California 93401-7906
(805) 549-3147 • Fax (805) 543-0397
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast>

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

December 17, 2007

Mr. Bill Bookout
470 Price Street
Pismo Beach, CA 93449

Dear Mr. Bookout

**PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST & INQUIRY REGARDING PISMO OCEANO
VEGETABLE EXCHANGE, SAN LUIS OBSIPO COUNTY**

This letter responds to your December 6, 2007 letter, regarding Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange, in which you request public records and inquire about water quality issues relating to the facility. Several of your questions/requests are the same as those presented in your September 17, 2007, letters. Therefore, we are including copy of our September 20, 2007, response to those prior requests for reference regarding those issues (Attachment 1).

Public Records Request - During late August and early September, 2007, you contacted Water Board staff to review records regarding Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange. Available Water Board records for the facility were retrieved from archived storage in Sacramento and sent to you by mail and FAX on September 13, 2007. By letters dated September 17, and December 6, 2007, you state that you have not received earlier requested records. The only additional record that we have located, since those transmitted to you on September 13, 2007, is a brief staff report for the July 11, 1997, Water Board meeting (Attachment 2). The records transmitted to you on September 13, 2007, and the attached staff report, constitute the entirety of available Water Board records fulfilling your request.

Technical Issues - In addition to the public records request, your December 6, 2007, letter poses technical questions regarding the Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange. Your questions are paraphrased below, followed by response to each question relating to Water Board authority.

Issue 1: Does the Water Board feel that the Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange pond is adequate to handle the rest of the County and State Highway 1 storm runoff?

Response: See response to Issues 5 and 6 of our attached September 20, 2007 letter.

Issue 2: Does the Water Board normally allow this type of water mixing so close to wetlands and the ocean? **Response:** See response to Issue 1 above and response to Issues 5 and 6 in our attached September 20, 2007 letter.

California Environmental Protection Agency

EO REPORT ATTACHMENT 2
FEBRUARY 7-8, 2008 MEETING
REG. BD. RESPONSE LTR DTD
12-17-07 TO BILL BOOKOUT

Issue 3: Did the Water Board receive/find an application from Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange? **Response:** As described in response to Issue 1 in our September 20, 2007 letter, waste discharge requirements were issued in 1986 to Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange. Waste discharge requirements are not presented for Water Board consideration until an application has been completed. Although we have been unable to locate the original application, we believe that Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange submitted an application prior to issuance of the waste discharge requirements in 1986.

Issue 4: Why does nearby well water contain nitrate concentrations in excess of 81 mg/L? Is this nitrate concentration safe for drinking and could it effect wetlands or the ocean? **Response:** There are likely several contributing factors resulting in nitrate concentrations in groundwater. However, we are unclear what specific area (well) to which you might be referring and have limited information regarding groundwater nitrate levels for the Oceano vicinity. Therefore, we cannot state why a nearby well contains nitrate levels of 81 mg/L. Drinking water standards limit nitrate to 45 mg/L, accordingly we would not consider concentrations of 81 mg/L acceptable for drinking water supply. By copy of this letter, we will inform San Luis Obispo County Health Department (authority over small water supply systems) of the high nitrate levels. Effects of nitrate discharge to wetlands or the ocean can range from a plant growth stimulant (nutrient) to toxicity (at very high levels).

Issue 5: What is the Water Board's authority relative to water safety? **Response:** The Water Board's authority extends to protecting and restoring water quality for current and future beneficial uses. Detailed information regarding the Water Board, its authority and programs, is available online at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast>

Issue 6: Why does the Water Board allow continued use of the basin? **Response:** See response to Issue 6 in our September 20, 2007, letter. Also, as indicated above (response to Issue 3), discharge from Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange is allowed because it does not pose a potential threat to water quality (demonstrated by ten years of regulatory oversight). In its Resolution R3-2002-0115, the Central Coast Water Board waives reporting and waste discharge requirements for discharges that are not likely to impact water quality. The cooling and condensate water discharged from the Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange to the adjacent percolation pond does not pose a significant water quality threat, therefore formal regulation is not warranted. The discharge is similar to those described in Resolution R3-2002-0115, for which reporting and waste discharge requirements are waived.

Your letter will be provided to the Water Board members in the next meeting agenda, accompanied by a brief staff summary (Attachment 3). If you have questions regarding these issues, please contact **Sorrel Marks at 549-3695** or Harvey Packard at 542-4639.

Sincerely,


Or Roger W. Briggs
Executive Officer

Attachments:

1. September 20, 2007 letter to Bill Bookout
2. July 11, 1997, Staff Report
3. February 8, 2008, Staff Summary

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Agency File: SLO Co.
Task: 126-01

cc:
SLO Co. Health Dept.
P.O Box 1489
San Luis Obispo CA 93406-1489

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 11, 1997
Prepared on June 19, 1997

ITEM NUMBER: 10

SUBJECT: Recision Waste Discharge Requirements - Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange San Luis Obispo County, Board Order No. 86-171

KEY INFORMATION

Location: Oceano, California, between Highway 1 and Oceano Airport
Design Capacity: 2350 GPD
Existing Flow: 500 GPD
Treatment: N/A
Disposal: Retention pond, percolation
Reclamation: N/A
Existing Order: Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 86-171

DISCUSSION

The Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange is a cold storage facility located in Oceano, approximately 12.5 miles south of San Luis Obispo. Locally grown produce is placed in cold storage at this facility after cooling in an on-site hydrocooler.

The discharge consists of hydrocooler condensate, cooling water, and cold storage area condensate. The discharges are to an on-site storm water detention/percolation pond. Original plans for the facility estimated that 1800 gallons per day of water would be discharged at this facility. However, during routine inspections, only 500 gallons per day of drainage water were being discharged. Monitoring data indicates the discharge is comparable to ground water in the vicinity with regard to total dissolved solids (approximately 800 mg/l) and otherwise pollutant free. The retention pond is used primarily for storm runoff from nearby streets.

Staff has reviewed the monitoring data and the facility inspection reports since Order No. 86-171 was adopted. The low flows, ample capacity, and characteristics of the discharge

(essentially pollutant free) indicate wastewater discharges from Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange do not pose a significant threat to water quality. Therefore, staff recommends rescinding the requirements.

Paul Quinlan has been notified regarding this proposed recision and advised that recision of Order No. 86-171 is based on continued operation and maintenance of the facility in good condition. Staff can re-evaluate this facility at any time and draft revised requirements if conditions should change.

COMMENTS

Discharger - No Response
State Water Resources Control Board - No Response

RECOMMENDATION

Rescind Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 86-171.

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September 20, 2007

Mr. Bill Bookout
470 Price Street
Pismo Beach, CA 93449

Dear Mr. Bookout

PISMO OCEANO VEGETABLE EXCHANGE, SAN LUIS OBSIPO COUNTY

This letter responds to your September 17, 2007 letters, regarding Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange. This letter addresses only those issues within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast Water Board, and makes no attempt to correct or respond to statements relating to actions, authority or requirements of San Luis Obispo County, Oceano Community Services District, California Department of Transportation, or Southern Pacific Railroad. We suggest you contact those agencies directly for information regarding their regulatory authority.

Issue 1: Waste Discharge Requirements were not issued by the Central Coast Water Board.

Response: As described in your recent telephone conversations with Sorrel Marks and stated in written response from Sue Gerdsen, the Central Coast Water Board issued Waste Discharge Requirements to Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange. The requirements were issued in 1986.

Issue 2: Pesticides were not analyzed by the Water Board.

Response: Pesticide monitoring data was not amongst the information located in our archived files (copies of which have been provided to you). However, we have not located the archived original application or correspondence file for Pismo Ocean Vegetable Exchange, which is the most likely place for such information if it existed. Accordingly, we cannot at this time verify or refute your statement.

Issue 3: Letters show tested items over their limits.

Response: The information provided to you from our files does not specify discharge limits. However, the monitoring data provided does not indicate test results exceeding any water quality limits of which we are aware.

Issue 4: Complete chemical and pesticide analyses of wastewater and sludge was not included in the information provided September 13, 2007, from Water Board files.

Response: Correct, see response to Issue 2 above.

Issue 5: Did the Water Board find the Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange basin permissible?

Response: The Water Board does not specifically regulate structures, such as basins, but regulates discharges of waste so as to prevent impacts to water quality. As stated above and summarized in telephone conversations with Sorrel Marks, the Water Board authorized discharge of wastewater from the facility in 1986. In this case, the Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange applied for, and was issued, waste discharge requirements (authorization to discharge). Approximately ten years later, after inspections, monitoring and finding that the

California Environmental Protection Agency



discharge posed little or no threat to water quality, the Water Board rescinded the waste discharge requirements.

Issue 6: Have any government agencies (County, Oceano CSD, CalTrans) applied for permits to blend and store storm runoff with Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange discharge?

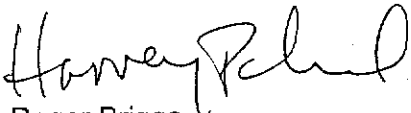
Response: Storm runoff blending permits, such as you described, are not required, and (as far as we know) have not been applied for. San Luis Obispo County has developed, and this Water Board has approved, a stormwater management plan applicable county-wide. Further information regarding the County's stormwater management plan is available at:

http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3/stormwater/municipal/phase_2/slo_co/slo_co_index.htm.

Implementation of the County's stormwater management plan includes a variety of monitoring activities. For specific details regarding the status and location of such monitoring, please contact the County Public Works Department directly.

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact **Sorrel Marks at 549-3695** or **Harvey Packard at 542-4639**.

Sincerely,



R Roger Briggs
Executive Officer

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Agency File: SLO Co.
Task: 126-01

For February 8, 2008, EO Report

Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange - At the December 7, 2007 Water Board meeting, Mr. Bill Bookout summarized his concerns regarding drainage and flooding issues in Oceano. Mr. Bookout reviewed his December 6, 2007 letter and requested that the Water Board consider issues summarized therein at its next meeting. Mr. Bookout's December 6, 2007 letter, is included as EO Report Attachment ___.

As background, in 1986, this Water Board adopted waste discharge requirements authorizing discharge of cooling and condensate waters from Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange. The Water Board pursued regulation of the discharge partly in response to concerns expressed in the 1985 letters included as attachments to Mr. Bookout's submittals. After ten years of regulation, compliance inspections and monitoring, the Water Board concluded that discharge from Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange did not threaten water quality and rescinded the waste discharge requirements in 1997.

Mr. Bookout originally contacted staff in August 2007, seeking to review files on Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange. To date, information relating to Pismo-Oceano Vegetable Exchange provided to Mr. Bookout includes records from archived storage in Sacramento and Water Board staff (Sorrel Marks) memory, and constitute all information available on this facility. Letters responding to Mr. Bookouts's September 17, and December 6, 2007, requests are included as EO Report Attachments ___ and ___.

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