STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF April 16-17, 2026

Prepared on March 30, 2026

ITEM NUMBER: **9**

SUBJECT: **ITEM 9A. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED GENERAL ORDER R3-2026-0032, MODIFICATION OF GENERAL WAIVER FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF LIMITED-THREAT WASTE DISCHARGES, (GENERAL WAIVER)**

ITEM 9B. CONSIDERATION OF ENROLLMENT OF SPACE EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGIES CORP (SPACE X), VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE, SPACE LAUNCH COMPLEX 4, FALCON 9 LAUNCH FACILITY, IN PROPOSED GENERAL ORDER R3-2026-0032

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ACTION: **Consider adopting proposed Order R3-2026-0032 and Attachment A; Consider adopting Resolution R3-2026-0031 to authorize SpaceX enrollment in proposed Order R3-2026-0032 and proposed Monitoring and Reporting Program Order R3-2026-0032**

SUMMARY

The General Waiver identifies specific limited-threat discharge types that the Executive Officer may enroll in the General Waiver. Proposed limited-threat discharges not specifically identified in the General Waiver may be enrolled under Section D, contingent upon Central Coast Water Board consideration and approval. Any such additional limited-threat discharges (Additional Discharges) may be added if certain requirements are met.

This staff report provides an overview of the General Waiver and the proposed modifications. It also provides an overview of the proposed enrollment of SpaceX's discharges of rocket launch deluge water and intermittent comingled stormwater via

onsite land surface disposal at the SpaceX's launch facility located at Space Launch Complex 4 (SLC 4), Falcon 9 Launch Facility, 731 Kelp Road, Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB), Santa Barbara County, California.

SpaceX's proposed discharge type is not specifically identified in the General Waiver; therefore, Central Coast Water Board approval is required to enroll the discharge in the General Waiver. Central Coast Water Board staff have evaluated the potential threat to water quality from the rocket launch activities at SLC-4 and determined that the SpaceX rocket launch wastewater discharges are not a significant threat to water quality and the proposed discharge meets the requirements for enrollment in the General Waiver. Additionally, as a condition of enrollment, SpaceX (Discharger) must implement additional water quality monitoring as described in proposed Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) Order R3-2026-0011.

Item 9 is for the Central Coast Water Board to consider the following two actions: 1) adopt minor modifications in the Proposed General Waiver to clarify how Additional Discharges are enrolled, and 2) adopt Proposed Resolution R3-2026-0031 to authorize enrollment of Space X, SLC 4, Falcon 9 Launch Facility, in the General Waiver and associated proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011.

DISCUSSION

Background

General Waiver for Specific Types of Limited-Threat Waste Discharges

California Water Code section 13263 provides regional water quality control boards (Regional Water Boards) with authority to issue waste discharge requirements for any waste discharge, other than those into community sewer systems, that could affect the quality of waters of the state. Persons who discharge waste that could affect the waters of the state must submit a report of the waste discharge (ROWD) and obtain waste discharge requirements (WDRs).

Section 13269 of the California Water Code allows Regional Water Boards to waive the requirement to submit a ROWD and to obtain WDRs for specific discharges or specific types of discharges. The Water Code requires that such waivers must be conditional, in the public interest, and consistent with applicable water quality control plans. Waivers expire after five years but may be renewed by a Regional Water Board. Prior to renewing any waiver, the Regional Water Board must review the terms of the waiver at a public hearing. The first iteration of the Central Coast Water Board's general waiver, General Waiver Order R3-2002-0015, was adopted by the Central Coast Water Board in 2002. It was subsequently updated by General Waiver Order R3-2008-0010, General Waiver Order R3-2014- 0041, General Waiver Order R3-2019-0089, and most recently in 2024, with General Waiver Order R3-2024-0035.

General Waiver Order R3-2024-0035 authorizes enrollment of 14 different categories of limited-threat discharges and allows enrollment of Additional Discharges. Enrollment of Additional Discharges is contingent upon Central Coast Water Board consideration and

approval at a regularly scheduled Central Coast Water Board hearing; and the discharges must meet all General Waiver general conditions and any additional site-specific or discharge-specific conditions prescribed by the Executive Officer. Additional Discharges require a ROWD including a one-time fee equal to the minimum annual fee identified in the fee schedule (title 23, section 2200 of the CCR), any applicable analysis that may be required under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and a demonstration that the discharges are a low or limited threat to water quality.

Currently, General Waiver Order R3-2024-0035 does not include clear language concerning future enrollment of Additional Discharges and does not include a clear mechanism by which Additional Discharges could be added to the General Waiver. The Proposed General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032 and Attachment A includes modifications that make it clear that Additional Discharges can be added to the General Waiver upon consideration and approval of enrollment by the Central Coast Water Board via resolution at a regularly scheduled Board hearing. No other substantive changes to the General Waiver have been made. The Proposed General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032 including Attachment A is provided as Attachment 1A and 1B to the staff report, respectively.

SpaceX Rocket Launch Activities at VSFB

VSFB is located on the north coast of Santa Barbara County and spans almost 100,000 acres and 35 miles of California coastline. It is the third-largest Department of Air Force (DAF) installation, supporting west coast launch activities for the DAF, Department of Defense (DoD), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), other national programs, and various private industry contractors, such as Firefly Aerospace, United Launch Alliance, and SpaceX.

SpaceX launches Falcon 9 rockets from SLC-4 at VSFB. SLC-4, located in the southern portion of VSFB along the coast, includes two launch complexes: SLC-4 West and SLC-4 East (SLC-4W and SLC-4E, respectively). Both SLCs were used to launch Atlas/Agena missiles during the 1960s, and later to launch Titan missiles starting in 1966 at SLC-4W and in 1971 at SLC-4E. The last Titan launch was conducted at SLC-4E in October 2005. The fenced area footprint surrounding the SLC-4 facility is approximately 122 acres and incorporates all facility aspects, including the wastewater discharge spray field areas, Landing Zone 4 (LZ-4), and groundwater beneath the site.

Launching a Falcon 9 rocket requires water (referred to as launch deluge water) to suppress noise, heat, and vibrations. Before launching, water is present within the flame bucket below the rocket motors. Just prior to and during rocket liftoff, water is sprayed downward into the rocket exhaust from towers positioned around the rocket. Heat from the rocket motors flashes much of the water into steam. Most of the steam is funneled through the flame bucket below the rocket, then outward. Mobilized water that is still liquid generally flows along the concrete-lined flame duct and terminates at a concrete-lined retention basin. Water from this retention basin is pumped to a spray field where it is discharged to land. During the rainy season, rainwater/stormwater becomes incidentally

comingled with the launch deluge water within the retention basin and is discharged to land along with launch deluge water.

The existing spray field encompasses 20,000 square feet. There is also an abandoned spray field that is similar in size to the existing spray field. This abandoned spray field could be refurbished and brought back into service. Groundwater is encountered under the spray fields at approximately 142 feet below ground surface. The sediments under the spray fields, between the land surface and groundwater, are silty sand[1] and fine sand with minor silt and trace clay.[2] The Pacific Ocean is located approximately 3,460 feet (0.66 mile) west of the wastewater discharge spray fields. However, the site's soil type readily percolates water, which prevents discharge of the launch water directly into the Pacific Ocean.

SLC-4 Legacy Soil and Groundwater Contamination

Historical industrial practices at SLC-4, circa 1960s to 1980s, resulted in contaminated soil and groundwater. Sources of this legacy contamination were associated with pre-launch degreasing operations, launch operations, post-launch sandblasting and painting operations, retention basin discharge, petroleum underground storage tanks, and a rocket that detonated soon after liftoff in April 1986. It has been reported that historically approximately 150 to 180 gallons of trichloroethene (TCE; a chlorinated solvent) were used to clean the rocket motors prior to launch.

In the late 1980s SLC-4 entered the DAF's Installation Restoration Program (IRP) for site investigation and remediation for legacy contamination, consistent with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA).

Pursuant to the IRP process, shallow soils impacted by legacy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) associated with post-launch sandblasting paint from surfaces, and metals associated with sandblast grit and spreading sludge on the land surface, have been excavated and removed from Site WP008 to the extent that human health and ecological risks were reduced to less than significant levels (USAF 2013).[3] However, there are residual legacy contaminants in soil, below concentrations that represent a significant risk to human or ecological receptors. Groundwater impacted by legacy TCE its degradation products *cis*-1,2-dichloroethene and vinyl chloride, due to the use of TCE to degrease/clean equipment, rocket motors, and liquid oxygen conveyance piping and perchlorate from the rocket launch that detonated upon liftoff, has been assessed and undergoing remediation since 2005.

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[1] Geosolutions *Percolation Testing Report*, March 2025; boring logs B-1, P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4; starting on page 71 of 177 in ROWD Attachment E: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=865pv

[2] IT Corporation, boring log 8MW-7 (also known as 8-MW-7 and 8-MW-07): https://documents.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/esi/uploads/geo_bore/5353162467/DOD100411300.pdf

[3] United Stace Air Force (USAF), 2013. *Record of Decision/Remedial Action Plan, Installation Restoration Program, Site 8 Cluster (Sites 8, 9 and10)*. October. https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=y57d5

Groundwater in the SLC-4 spray field area is impacted by legacy TCE and perchlorate. The most recent groundwater sampling results (May 2025) indicated TCE and perchlorate concentrations at 46 micrograms per liter (µg/L) and 57.6 µg/L, respectively.

Importantly, the current SpaceX Falcon 9 launch process does not utilize legacy contaminants such as TCE and perchlorate and Central Coast Water Board staff have determined that the SpaceX rocket launch wastewater discharges are not a significant threat to water quality.

History of SpaceX Enrollment in the General Waiver and the Proposed Enrollment

In 2013, SpaceX was initially enrolled in General Waiver Order R3-2008-0010. In subsequent years, General Waiver Order R3-2008-0010 was superseded by General Waiver Orders R3-2014-0041, R3-2019-0089, and R3-2024-0035. General Waiver Order R3-2024-0035 will be superseded by proposed General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032, upon Board approval.

Due to SpaceX increasing the annual launch cadence from five launches per year in 2013 to up to 100 launches per year at SLC-4, Central Coast Water Board staff have reevaluated the launch wastewater discharge to confirm that the discharge continues to be limited threat to water quality. Based on the information provided by SpaceX in their 2025 ROWD and May-June 2025 groundwater monitoring data (described in the following section), Central Coast Water Board staff are proposing to continue SpaceX's enrollment in the Proposed General Waiver and Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011, with Board approval.

Past SLC-4 Launch Wastewater Discharge and Groundwater Monitoring

In 2017, in cooperation with Central Coast Water Board staff, SpaceX prepared and implemented a SLC-4 Spring Canyon discharge interim mitigation, monitoring, and reporting plan (IMMRP). The IMMRP's scope included sampling launch wastewater from the retention basin four times, and launch-steam temperature monitoring on the west side of Spring Canyon. Results from the IMMRP were reported in SpaceX's November 2018 ROWD (Form 200) submittal, which supported subsequent reenrollment in the General Waiver (Order R3-2014-0041).

In January 2025, as part of the application for the 2025 ROWD, SpaceX collected launch wastewater samples which were tested for metals, PAHs, fuel components (e.g., total petroleum hydrocarbons [TPH], volatile organic compounds [VOCs], semi-volatile organic compounds [SVOCs]), PCBs, cresols, organochlorine pesticides (e.g., dieldrin, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane [DDT], etc.), phthalates, and other constituents for comparison with Ocean Plan criteria; see Figure I-1 in the ROWD.[1]

The list of chemicals/constituents that launch wastewater was tested for in 2018 and 2025 was based on the possibility that the wastewater discharge might be regulated under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, conservatively assuming that wastewater could be discharged directly into the ocean. However, due to the wastewater discharge occurring on land, and the site's soil type that readily percolates water, preventing wastewater discharge to the ocean, regulation through the waste discharge requirement (WDR) program is appropriate.

In May 2025, at the Central Coast Water Board's request, the DAF sampled groundwater from twelve select wells located near the SLC-4 retention basin, along Spring Canyon, proximal to the spray fields, and downgradient of these areas. Rocket propellent-1 (RP-1) launch fuel is used for the Falcon 9 rocket. RP-1 is a mid-range-distillate petroleum similar to diesel and kerosene. Therefore, the groundwater samples were analyzed for TPH-diesel and TPH using a jet-fuel quantification standard (TPH-JP-5). TPH-diesel and TPH-JP-5 were not detected above the limits of detection, which ranged from 99 to 100 µg/L. For comparison, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Environmental Screening Level (ESL) odor nuisance level for petroleum in drinking water is 100 µg/L, and the ESL nuisance level for petroleum in non-drinking water is 5,000 µg/L.[4]

Proposed Monitoring and Reporting Program Order R3-2026-0011

The list of proposed wastewater monitoring parameters and criteria in Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011 are consistent with the Basin Plan and parameters/criteria required by other facilities regulated by the WDR program. Testing for TPH is a site-specific contaminant type that is added to the monitoring parameters at SLC-4, due to the RP-1 fuel type used by Falcon 9 rockets.

Based on experience at other cleanup sites, Central Coast Water Board staff have observed that dissolved-phase TPH (at approximately 1 milligram per liter [mg/L] concentration or less) may support groundwater treatment for the legacy TCE and perchlorate plumes similar to the remediation technique used in this area (injecting liquid carbon substrate to assist bioremediation treatment).

The launch wastewater sampling frequency of a minimum once per year or once every 30 launches, whichever is more frequent, included in the Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011 is based on the relative consistency between chemical analytical results from the four sampling events performed in 2018, and results from the sampling event conducted in January 2025. Over a 6-year period there is demonstrated general consistency through time in launch wastewater chemistry associated with the current Falcon 9 launch process and fuel type used. This general consistency supports a relatively infrequent sampling schedule (e.g., minimum once per year or once every 30 launches, whichever is more frequent). However, if the launch process changes, if the first-stage fuel type is modified, and/or if results from periodic sampling show a change from the previously demonstrated chemistry, SpaceX must notify the Central Coast

[4] See pages 3 of 23 and 8 of 23 in the ESL summary tables pdf at this link: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb2/water_issues/programs/ESL/ESL_Summary_Tables_Rev3.pdf

Water Board immediately of such changes, and the water sampling monitoring schedule will be reevaluated and revised.

National Environmental Policy Act and California Environmental Quality Act

In September 2024, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the DAF prepared an environmental assessment / finding of no significant impact (EA/FONSI)[5] to analyze potential environmental consequences for a launch cadence increase from up to 35 launches per year, to up to 50 Falcon 9 launches per year from SLC-4.

In May 2025, pursuant to NEPA, the DAF prepared an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze potential environmental consequences, culminating in a record of decision (ROD) authorizing space launch complex 6 (SLC-6; 3.5 miles south of SLC-4) redevelopment and an overall launch cadence of up to 100 launches per year for Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy launches from SLC-4 and SLC-6 combined. The proposed action and alternatives were evaluated, public review occurred, and public hearings were held. During the draft EIS public comment period Central Coast Water Board staff attended a DAF January 15, 2025 public scoping meeting, attended a DAF's public hearing held June 11, 2025, and provided the DAF with formal comments[6] on the draft EIS on July 7, 2025. The ROD was finalized by the DAF on October 10, 2025.[7]

The ROD's Attachment A references mitigation and monitoring defined in the final EIS stating that: "Launch related wastewater and stormwater that accumulates within the flame trenches would be tested for contamination and disposed of per Regional Water Quality Control Board waste discharge waiver or permit and federal regulations." This statement applies to both SLC-4 and SLC-6. However, this 2026 Notice of Applicability (NOA) for enrollment in the General Waiver pertains to the increase in a launch cadence of up to 100 launches per year at SLC-4 only. SLC-6 launch permitting will be addressed separately by the Central Coast Water Board in a future action.

The DAF's October 10, 2025 ROD acknowledges the discharges must be permitted by the Central Coast Water Board. As previously indicated, water quality data provided by SpaceX in Figure I-1 of the ROWD and groundwater monitoring data collected by the DAF's IRP contractor at the request of the Central Coast Water Board confirms that the rocket launch wastewater discharges present no significant threat to water quality. As a result, the original CEQA analysis for the General Waiver encompasses these discharges, and staff determined it is appropriate to enroll SpaceX in the Proposed General Waiver for these discharges.

General Waiver Enrollment

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[5] November 11, 2024, DAF final environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, Falcon 9 cadence increase: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=v9ona

[6] July 7, 2025, Central Coast Water Board comment letter re draft EIS: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=ue021

[7] October 10, 2025, DAF record of decision (ROD), environmental impact statement, Attachment A with required mitigations is within the ROD Attachments file found at: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=efwcr

The General Waiver identifies specific discharge types that may be enrolled in the General Waiver. Rocket launch wastewater is not identified as one of the specific discharge types and therefore, as indicated in Section D of the General Waiver, the waste discharge may be enrolled contingent upon Board consideration and approval.

In 2013, when the SpaceX rocket launch cadence was up to five launches per year, Central Coast Water Board staff enrolled SpaceX in the General Waiver Order R3-2008-0010 for the discharge of rocket launch wastewater at SLC-4. Based on the standard ROWD Form 200 *Application /Report of Waste Discharge General Information Form for Waste Discharge Requirements or NPDES Permit*, the discharge at the time was categorized on Form 200 as Cooling Water, Industrial Process Wastewater, Storm Water, and Other (i.e., launch deluge water). This "Additional Discharge", i.e. not explicitly one of the discharge types described in the General Waiver Order R3-2008-0010, was demonstrated as not being a threat to water quality, consistent with the CEQA; as indicated in the November 13, 2013 Central Coast Water Board staff enrollment letter,[8] the discharges will be beneficially reused as irrigation water on adjacent vacant land, discharges must not cause or contribute to exceedance of groundwater quality objectives specified in the Basin Plan, and each of the water discharge types has been sampled and results of water quality analyses indicate the discharges will not pose a significant threat to underlying groundwater quality. In addition, discharge of hazardous materials or their residues are not authorized under the General Waiver.

In subsequent years, General Waiver Order R3-2008-0010 was superseded by General Waiver Order R3-2014-0041, R3-2019-0089, and most recently General Waiver Order R3-2024-0035. SpaceX's launch deluge water continues to be covered by the General Waiver. With the recent increase in Falcon 9 launches of up to 100 per year, Central Coast Water Board staff determined it was necessary to evaluate whether rocket launch wastewater discharge continues to be limited-threat. As described in this staff report, Central Coast Water Board staff determined that the discharges are not a significant threat to water quality.

Accordingly, staff recommends continued enrollment in the General Waiver, based on the information provided by SpaceX in the 2025 ROWD including the water quality data provided in Figure I-1 of the ROWD and groundwater monitoring data collected by the DAF IRP, and the 2024 EA/FONSI and 2025 NEPA EIS. The information provided confirms that the planned rocket launch wastewater discharges present no significant threat to water quality. Enrollment in the Proposed General Waiver and compliance with the General Conditions as presented in the Proposed General Waiver and the Central Coast Water Board's draft NOA and Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011 will ensure water quality is protected.

Proposed Resolution R3-2026-0031 authorizes SpaceX's enrollment in the Proposed General Waiver, Section D, Attachment A and adopts Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011 (Attachment 2). The draft NOA for SpaceX's enrollment in the General Waiver,

[8] November 13, 2013, Central Coast Water Board General Waiver enrollment letter: https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/?surl=1tjdm

Section D, Order R3-2026-0032 and MRP Order R3-2026-0011 are provided in Attachment 3.

Human Right to Water

California Water Code section 106.3, subdivision (a) states that it is the policy of the State of California "that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitation purposes." On January 26, 2017, the Central Coast Water Board adopted Resolution R3-2017-0004, which affirms the realization of the human right to water and the protection of human health as the Central Coast Water Board's top priorities.

The proposed enrollment is for a discharge type that has been demonstrated as limited-threat and thus meets the intent of Proposed General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032. Although groundwater at this location is not available for human consumption, cooking, and sanitation purposes, this proposed enrollment includes Proposed MRP Order No R3-2026-0011, which will further document and confirm the limited-threat to groundwater quality into the future, and protect drinking water beneficial uses.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice principles call for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of all environmental laws, regulations, and policies that affect every community's natural resources and the places people live, work, play and learn. The Central Coast Water Board implements regulatory activities and water quality projects in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of all people, including underrepresented communities. Underrepresented communities include but are not limited to disadvantaged communities (DACs), severely disadvantaged communities (SDACs), economically distressed areas (EDAs), tribes, environmentally disadvantaged communities (EnvDACs), and members of Fringe Communities.[9] Furthermore, the Central Coast Water Board is committed to providing all persons the

[9] Disadvantaged community: a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income (Public Resources Code section 80002(e)); severely disadvantaged community: a community with a median household income of less than 60% of the statewide average. (Public Resources Code section 80002(n)); economically distressed area: a municipality with a population of 20,000 persons or less, a rural county, or a reasonably isolated and divisible segment of a larger municipality where the segment of the population is 20,000 persons or less with an annual median household income that is less than 85% of the statewide median household income and with one or more of the following conditions as determined by the department: (1) financial hardship, (2) unemployment rate at least 2% higher than the statewide average, or (3) low population density. (Water Code section 79702(k)); tribes: federally recognized Indian Tribes and California State Indian Tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission's California Tribal Consultation List; EnvDACs: CalEPA designates the top 25 percent scoring census tracts as DACs. Census tracts that score the highest five percent of pollution burden scores but do not have an overall CalEnviroScreen score because of unreliable socioeconomic or health data are also designated as DACs (refer to the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Mapping Tool or results Excel sheet); fringe community: communities that do not meet the established DAC, SDAC, and EDA definitions but can show that it scores in the top 25 percent of either the Pollution Burden or Population Characteristics score using the CalEnviroScreen 4.0.

opportunity to participate in the public process and provide meaningful input to decisions that affect their communities.

Central Coast Water Board staff have evaluated discharge impacts related to disadvantaged communities. The discharge location (an unincorporated area on a military base in Santa Barbara County) is not within a DAC per CalEnviroScreen 4.0. The closest DAC is the western portion of Lompoc, which is approximately 7.8 miles to the east. The next closest DAC is in an area that includes the Guadalupe and Casmalia communities, approximately 22 miles and 13.5 miles, respectively, north of the discharge area. Groundwater under the SLC-4 discharge spray field(s) flows to the west and northwest toward the Pacific Ocean; it does not flow toward water supply wells and has no connection to water used by nearby communities, nor connection to water used by agriculture.

Central Coast Water Board staff determined that the regulation of this waste discharge complies with the General Waiver, will not pose a significant threat to water quality, is distant from the closest DAC's water resources, and is therefore unlikely to impact DACs. If impacts to surface water or groundwater result from the discharges regulated by the proposed order, Central Coast Water Board staff will help facilitate outreach and education to inform affected parties and connect them with available resources.

Although the proposed discharge is not expected to impact a disadvantaged or tribal community, the Central Coast Water Board has satisfied the outreach requirements set forth in Water Code section 189.7 by conducting outreach to potentially interested groups representing disadvantaged communities and tribal communities. Furthermore, the Central Coast Water Board is committed to providing all stakeholders with the opportunity to participate in the public process and provide meaningful input to decisions that affect their communities.

Climate Change

The Central Coast faces the threat and the effects of climate change for the foreseeable and distant future. To proactively prepare and respond, the Central Coast Water Board is implementing the Central Coast Water Board's Climate Action Initiative, which identifies how the Central Coast Water Board's work relates to climate change and prioritizes actions that improve water supply resiliency through water conservation and wastewater reuse and recycling; mitigate for and adapt to sea level rise and increased flooding; improve energy efficiency; and reduce greenhouse gas production. The Climate Action Initiative is consistent with the Governor's Executive Order B-30-15 and the State Water Resource Control Board Climate Change Resolution 2017-0012.[10]

The proposed enrollment protects water quality and includes an ongoing monitoring and reporting program to demonstrate compliance over time. Further, by managing, treating and discharging the wastewater at the site, carbon emissions associated with regular trucking of the wastewater to the nearest wastewater treatment facility are avoided. To reduce potable water use, a water-cooled diverter system is scheduled for construction

[10] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2017/rs2017_0012.pdf

by SpaceX, with 32,000-gallon on-site storage tank allowing for launch-related wastewater collection and reutilization as deluge water for follow-on launch events.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Draft General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032 was released for public comment and current enrollees, agencies, tribal contacts, and other interested persons were notified via mail or email on March 11, 2026[11]. Written comments are due by April 10, 2026. If public comments are received, the Central Coast Water Board will include the public comments and staff responses as a supplemental sheet to this staff report.

The proposed NOA and MRP Order R3-2026-0011 were released for public comment on January 26, 2026, and written comments were due by February 26, 2026. The public comments and Central Coast Water Board staff responses to public comments received are provided as Attachment 4 to this staff report. The NOA and MRP were not revised based on the comments received; however, minor clarifying revisions were made to the NOA and MRP.

Proposed Resolution R3-2026-0031 to authorize enrollment in the General Waiver, Section D, Attachment A and adopt MRP Order R3-2026-0011 (Attachment 2) was made available to the public with the agenda publicly posted on the Central Coast Water Board website for the April 16-17, 2026 regular Board meeting.

CONCLUSION

The modifications in the Proposed General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032 improve its clarity and provide a mechanism by which to enroll Additional Discharges. No substantive changes to the General Waiver have been made.

As described in Proposed Resolution R3-2006-0031, Central Coast Water Board staff have evaluated the potential threat to water quality from the rocket launch activities at SLC-4 and determined that the SpaceX rocket launch wastewater discharges are not a significant threat to water quality. The proposed discharge is appropriately regulated and enrollment is consistent with the General Waiver, complies with state and federal law and regulations, and is protective of water quality. Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011 is sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the Proposed General Waiver. The enrollment in the Proposed General Waiver and adoption of Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011 will not lead to significant threats to waters of the state and are consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the state.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt Proposed General Waiver Order R3-2026-0032.

[11] The public notice and Draft Order R3-2026-0032 are available on the Central Coast Water Board website at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/tentative_orders/

2. Approve Resolution R3-2006-0031 to authorize the Executive Officer to enroll SpaceX in the Proposed General Waiver Order R3 2026-0032, Section D, Attachment A and Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011.

ATTACHMENTS

1A. Proposed *General Waiver for Specific Types of Limited-Threat Waste Discharges, Order R3-2026-0032*.

1B. Proposed *General Waiver for Specific Types of Limited-Threat Waste Discharges, Order R3-2026-0032* Attachment A.

2. Proposed Resolution R3-2026-0031 to authorize enrollment in the General Waiver and adopt MRP Order R3-2026-0011.

3. Draft Notice of Applicability for SpaceX's Enrollment in the General Waiver Order R3 2026-0032, Attachment A, Section D and Proposed MRP Order R3-2026-0011.

4. Response to Comments.

FIGURE 1. VICINITY LOCATION MAP

FIGURE 2. LAUNCH WASTEWATER RETENTION BASIN AND SPRAY FIELD LOCATION MAP