

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

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26-27, 2026

Prepared on February 10, 2026

ITEM NUMBER: 11

SUBJECT: Status Update – Administrative Orders on Consent for California Men’s Colony, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and United States Environmental Protection Agency

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ACTION: Information/Discussion

SUMMARY

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) owns and operates the California Men’s Colony (CMC) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the CMC Drinking Water Treatment Plant (WTP). This informational item is in response to a request made by board members at the February 2025 board meeting, for CDCR and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to provide an update on the status of CDCR’s compliance with the corrective actions required in the Administrative Orders on Consent (AOCs) issued by U.S. EPA. Representatives from both CDCR and U.S. EPA will present on CDCR’s progress on meeting the conditions in the AOCs.

BACKGROUND

CDCR owns and operates the CMC WWTP that treats domestic wastewater from CMC’s facilities, the California Army National Guard’s Camp San Luis Obispo, Cuesta College, and several San Luis Obispo County facilities, including the county jail, education center, and operations facility, and is required to comply with *Waste Discharge Requirements Order R3-2020-0005 (as amended by Order R3-2023-0010)*, *NPDES Permit CA0047856 (NPDES Permit)*. CDCR also owns and operates the CMC WTP that supplies potable water to CMC facilities and other customers, when treated

drinking water is not available from the Central Coast Water Authority.¹ CDCR uses its WTP to treat raw water from Chorro Reservoir and Whale Rock Reservoir. Sand filters are a component of the drinking water treatment processes and filter backwash waste is generated as a waste stream when CDCR cleans the sand filters. CDCR does not have a permit from the Central Coast Water Board to discharge the filter backwash waste.

CDCR has a history of non-compliance at the CMC WWTP and WTP, and the Central Coast Water Board has taken multiple enforcement actions. Most recently, at the February 2025 Central Coast Water Board meeting, the board approved Settlement Agreement and Stipulation for Entry of Administrative Civil Liability (ACL) Order R3-2025-0005, for a liability of \$1,671,605, to resolve alleged violations for unauthorized discharges of waste from the WWTP and WTP and for NPDES Permit effluent limitation violations.

The U.S. EPA has also taken enforcement actions against CDCR for noncompliance at CMC's WWTP and WTP. Under a Common Interest Agreement executed in April 2021, the Central Coast Water Board and U.S. EPA enforcement staff jointly investigated and developed allegations against CDCR for their CMC operations. As a result of that coordinated effort, U.S. EPA and CDCR entered into the following two separate Administrative Orders on Consent (AOCs):²

1. On September 14, 2023, U.S. EPA and CDCR entered into an AOC to address certain effluent limitation violations from March 2019 to October 2022, plastics in WWTP influent and effluent, unauthorized discharges to Chorro Creek from a leaking drinking water storage tank, and an unauthorized discharge of 6,000 gallons of sanitary sewer overflows to Chorro Creek, and to require that CDCR conduct studies and make repairs to CMC water and wastewater infrastructure. U.S. EPA and CDCR have agreed to AOC amendments and the most recently modified AOC was finalized on April 11, 2025.
2. On May 16, 2024, U.S. EPA and CDCR entered into another AOC to address unauthorized discharges of filter backwash waste from the WTP to Chorro Reservoir and Chorro Creek, and to require that CDCR produce and implement an approved work plan to address the unauthorized discharges.

Central Coast Water Board staff and U.S. EPA staff continue to regularly coordinate to jointly investigate and follow up on ongoing noncompliance issues at CMC's facilities and on corrective actions and deliverables required by the AOCs.

¹ The Central Coast Water Authority is a public entity that owns and operates a water treatment plant and pipeline that delivers water from the State Water Project to project participants in portions of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

² Prior to the February 26-27, 2026, Central Coast Water Board meeting, staff provided board members copies of the most current versions of both AOCs. To request a copy of the most current versions of the AOCs, please contact the staff members listed by "Staff Contacts" above.