

ITEM:

SUBJECT: Valley Waste Disposal Company and Cawelo Water District, Kern Front No. 2 Treatment Plant – Cawelo Reservoir B, Kern County

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of NPDES Permit Renewal*

BACKGROUND: Valley Waste Disposal Company (VWDC) owns and operates its Kern Front No. 2 treatment plant in the Kern Front oil field. The treatment plant receives produced water from several oil producers in the oil field. About 85% of the produced water received by VWDC originates from Oxy U.S.A., Inc. (Oxy).

The Kern Front No. 2 treatment plant provides initial treatment through gravity separation in a series of two unlined ponds and final polishing with two Wemco air flotation units. Treated produced water is then pumped through a pipeline to Cawelo Water District's (CWD) Reservoir B. VWDC's treated produced water is blended with treated produced water from Chevron USA, Inc. (Chevron), and surface water imports from the Beardsley Canal. The blended produced water is then discharged from Reservoir B through a distribution canal as irrigation deliveries throughout the CWD. In winter months, when irrigation demand decreases, produced water in Reservoir B may be discharged through the distribution canal into Poso Creek, a water of the United States.

VWDC's report of waste discharge requested increases in flow rates and effluent limits for salts in anticipation of increased flow and salinity from Oxy. Chevron is also requesting increases in permit flow rates separately. Neither CWD, VWDC, nor Chevron have yet provided data demonstrating that the increased discharges will comply with the Basin Plan water quality objective that limits annual incremental increases in groundwater EC. Nor have they shown that the proposed increases will be consistent with CEQA. Thus, the proposed order does not grant increases in flow rates and effluent limits. The proposed Order includes new effluent limitations for arsenic. It renews the permit conditions currently in effect and describes what is necessary to support any future request for an increase and reports that are necessary to continue to discharge at the recommended limitations. USEPA has identified this as a priority permit.

ISSUES: Comments are due after completion of this agenda. The proposed rejection of the requested increases in flow rates and effluent limitations are the primary issues of VWDC. VWDC has requested that permit consideration and adoption be delayed until the impact studies necessary either to confirm consistency with the Basin Plan, or to support a favorable amendment to the Basin Plan, are completed. Comments, and staff's response to comments, will be provided to the Regional Water Board and interested parties as soon as possible.

Mgmt. Review: _____

Legal Review: _____

7/8 December 2006

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
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