



October 22, 2006

Greg Cash
Engineering Geologist - South Regulatory Unit CRWQCB, Region 5 –
415 Knollcrest Drive, Suite 100
Redding, CA 96002

Subject: Comments on Tentative Order for City of Biggs Wastewater Treatment Plant
ORDER NO. R5-2006
NPDES NO. CA0078930

WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
CITY OF BIGGS
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
BUTTE COUNTY

Dear Greg:

Pursuant to our ongoing discussions and our review of the aforementioned Tentative Discharge Order, please accept this letter as the Cities official comments for your consideration.

Item #1 - Lateral K is referred to as an agricultural drain, however I wish to point out that the lateral is not directly connected to Butte Creek. In fact this Lateral outlets to Hamilton Slough, which then flows approximately 5 miles east to Cherokee Canal, before ultimately joining Butte Creek. Lateral K is a “constructed” drain and has a defined grade and easement. We request that language be inserted to describe this situation, and that any inferences to Lateral K being part of a beneficial use as defined by the basin plan be either eliminated or further clarified.

Item #2 – Discharge prohibition E Page 9. This provision references the discharge of waste that causes violation of any “narrative” water quality objective contained in the Basin Plan. As a small discharge with limited funds, manpower and resources, we operate mostly in relation to numerical effluent limitations. This provision is somewhat abstract in the context on other related provisions, and subject to a wide range of interpretation. We request this be removed from the permit.

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Item #3 – Discharge prohibition G, Page 9. Remove the “narrative” reference from this prohibition.

Item #4 – Total Residual Chlorine. We request this limitation be reconfigured to allow the City to monitor for the presence of sodium bisulfite or other such “dechlorination” chemicals which can accurately be measured and monitored reliably. While as a pragmatic requirement for monitoring chlorine with a tertiary treatment scheme, with a pond facultative pond system such as the cities, it’s nearly impossible. We have struggled with this at great expense through our last permit, where the City spent in excess of \$100,000 in equipment alone to meet this requirement. We have an adopted Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that adequate dechlorination is taking place. We would like to work with the board to develop a limitation that accomplishes this water quality objective, allowing the city to utilize equipment and resources that will allow both the board and the city the ability to keep the system accurate and reliable.

Item #5 – Effluent limit for peak wet weather flow. I’m unclear why we have a permit that is being written with limitations based on both average dry weather flow and peak wet weather flow. This seems to be inconsistent with previous permits, both with the City and from my experience statewide. I’m not sure that peak wet weather limits are the critical item which ensures protecting the beneficial uses of the receiving water limits. This is especially true since the dilution during this time of year exceeds 40:1 in the referenced agricultural drain. We request the permit be written to reflect ADWF limits only.

Item #6 – Final effluent limit for Electrical Conductivity. We would request that the final effluent limit be withheld from this permit until the City has completed its electrical conductivity study required by the permit order. We would like the final effluent limit removed from this permit temporarily.

Item #7 – Effluent limits for Total Dissolved Solids – If this requirement is to remain, then we would request removing the EC requirements as this is duplicative effort.

Item #8 – Time limits to complete studies and work – We request that the time limits proposed within the permit regarding all studies, work, etc.. be extended an additional 1-year as the City of Biggs is a 51% low income community with very limited resources and manpower.

Item#9 – Collection System Requirements – The City of Biggs is opposed to any collection system requirements contained within the permit of waste discharge. The City of Biggs is a General Law City and the collection and transport system are publicly owned and operated. We require via city ordinance for the connection to the cities system. We have an adopted Sewer master plan, which includes collection, transport, treatment and disposal. Should additional statewide or regional requirements be necessary, we will address those separately from our treatment and effluent limits. We request that all collection system references be removed from this order.

Item #10 – Compliance Determination References – This seems inappropriate to include in a discharge order as the purview of this issue belongs under the enforcement section, not in permits. We request this be removed from the order.

Item #11 – Lowest Ambient Hardness to Calculate CTR Metals - We request this be modified to a geometric mean of hardness values, as the “lowest” is indicative of absolute worst case and is a burden to the City. From a practical aspect, given the dilution, and existing quality of the water in the agricultural drain, this criteria does nothing extra to protect water quality and is “over regulatory” without just cause. This does nothing to protect the organisms downstream. We request the Regional Board reconsider this calculation value to some form of a geometric mean.

Item #12 – Use of a compilation of water quality goals to select water quality goals. We are, at a minimum, confused about how to interpret this statement(s). This especially concerns the City when we use the “narrative” water quality objectives from the Basin Plan. To be honest, we are concerned about the implications this may have and would request it be eliminated from the permit.

Sincerely,

David L. Swartz, PE
City Engineer
City of Biggs

cc: file

Hayden Wasser – Chief Plant Operator
Robert Simpson – CEC Inc.
John Dougherty – Interim City Administrator
Pauline Palmer – CEC Inc.