

ITEM: 35

SUBJECT: R.M.E., Inc., Woodbridge Winery, San Joaquin County

BOARD ACTION: Consideration of a Cease and Desist Order

BACKGROUND: WDRs Order No. 87-184 authorizes discharge of winery wastewater by R.M.E. Inc. at the Woodbridge Winery. The facility is located adjacent to and north of the Mokelumne River and consists of a total of 202-acres. The winery crushes 100,000 to 150,000 tons of grapes annually and an expansion is planned. Wastewater generated contains high concentrations of BOD, total dissolved solids, and organic nitrogen. Wastewater is treated in four unlined ponds and then is applied to land.

Groundwater monitoring wells at the site show that the discharge has degraded groundwater with total dissolved solids (TDS), sulfate, chloride, sodium, and nitrogen compounds. As a result, on 8 October 2004, the Executive Officer issued a California Water Code Section 13267 Order. The Order required an evaluation of groundwater quality and submittal of a Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) describing wastewater system improvements to prevent further degradation. The RWD was submitted in July 2006, and staff's review found that the proposed winery expansion and wastewater system is not protective of groundwater quality.

Fixed dissolved solids and nitrogen have been applied at rates that significantly exceed the crop uptake capacity. This Order requires the Discharger to measure actual FDS uptake rates for the crops at this site and determine protective loading rates.

Despite the 13267 Order's requirement to do so, background groundwater quality has not been established; and therefore this Order provides the Discharger with another opportunity to establish the value. The Discharger has proposed a three-phase wastewater improvement plan that will take until August 2010 to implement. This Order requires that the facility improvements be implemented and that the resultant water quality impacts evaluated. Finally, a RWD be submitted in September 2010, and must describe the final improvements that will be made to prevent groundwater degradation.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the proposed Order.

Mgmt. Review _____
Legal Review _____

21/22 June 2007
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