

ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: City of Porterville Wastewater Treatment Facility, Tulare County

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Rescission of Cease and Desist Order R5-2001-104 and Revised Waste Discharge Requirements*

BACKGROUND: The City of Porterville (hereafter Discharger or City) owns and operates a Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) that serves Porterville and the nearby community of Porter Vista. Treated effluent is used to irrigate fodder and fiber crops. During the non-growing season when irrigation is not required, the effluent is discharged to percolation ponds with a high infiltration capacity. Based on groundwater data, excessive percolation in the past has affected groundwater quality in this area especially for nitrates and EC. In addition, artificial mounding of groundwater under the 43-acre disposal field had increased the groundwater gradient in the vicinity of the adjacent Teapot Dome Landfill.

The WWTF is regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order No. R5-2001-103, adopted on 27 April 2001. Cease and Desist Order (CDO) No. R5-2001-104, adopted concurrent with the WDRs, required the Discharger to perform a series of tasks according to a time schedule to come into compliance with groundwater limitations. The Discharger completed the tasks identified in the CDO, except for the task to evaluate, select, and propose cost-effective cleanup actions for sustained compliance with groundwater limitations. However, the Discharger implemented several management practices intended to prevent further degradation of groundwater, including increasing the land available for irrigation, and decreasing the amount of effluent allowed to percolate.

Update of WDRs Order No. R5-2001-103 is needed to ensure that the discharge is consistent with Regional Water Board plans and policies and prescribe requirements that are effective in protecting existing and potential uses of receiving waters, and to reflect changes the Discharger has made in its water recycling operation.

The proposed WDRs limit the monthly average daily flow to 5.3 mgd, with effluent limits for BOD₅ and TSS, consistent with the Basin Plan. To increase flows up to 8.0 mgd, the proposed Order requires that the Discharger submit a technical report and certification documenting that it has completed necessary improvements to add additional land to its irrigation plan and has sufficient disposal capacity to comply with the terms and conditions of this Order. The proposed Order also includes Provisions to prepare a salinity control plan and a

comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan to evaluate its recycling practices and the potential for use of extracted groundwater from areas beneath the Reclamation Area to ensure groundwater quality is restored and protected.

Comments were presented by the City and its consultant, Carollo Engineers. The main issue was a request to reduce the groundwater monitoring well network. Regional Water Board staff concur that not all existing monitoring wells need to be sampled and the tentative Monitoring and Reporting Program was revised to reduce the number of wells to be regularly sampled from twenty-three to nine.

ISSUES None

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the proposed orders.

Mgmt. Review_____

Legal Review_____

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