ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: Chester Public Utility District, Chester Wastewater Treatment Plant, Plumas County

BOARD ACTION: Consideration of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit renewal, rescission of Cease and Desist Order (CDO) R5-2009-0078, and adoption of a new CDO.

BACKGROUND: The Chester Public Utility District (hereinafter Discharger) is owner and operator of the Chester Wastewater Treatment Plant (hereinafter Facility). The Discharger provides sewerage service for the community of Chester, CA, which has a population of approximately 2,144 residents; there are no known significant or categorical industrial users within the community. The average dry weather design flow for the Facility is 0.75 million gallons per day (mgd). Average dry weather effluent permitted flow is limited to 0.5 mgd in consideration of dilution studies performed by the Discharger. Secondary treated effluent from the Facility may be discharged seasonally (1 October to 31 May) to Lake Almanor.

The Facility was designed to treat municipal wastewater to secondary treatment standards. Untreated sewage is pumped through a bar screen and flow is subsequently measured with a Parshall flume. After preliminary treatment, wastewater flow is split between two primary stabilization ponds and subsequently transferred through a series of four additional stabilization ponds. After passing through all stabilization ponds, treated wastewater is disinfected with chlorine gas in a contact basin prior to release into either: (1) a series of wetland ponds or (2) Lake Almanor via a 3,000 foot open channel, subsequent to dechlorination with sulfur dioxide gas (discharge of effluent to Lake Almanor is prohibited from 1 June through 30 September). Over the past 3.5 years, decreased infiltration and inflow (I/I) in the sanitary sewer collection system has resulted in less frequent discharges to Lake Almanor.

The proposed Cease and Desist Order (CDO) replaces three previous orders; CDO 89-069, CDO R5-2004-0051, and CDO R5-2009-0078. The CDOs have required the Discharger to make repairs to their collection system in order to reduce I/I, which has historically caused low percentage BOD and TSS removals, occasional disinfection problems, and occasionally, discharges to the Lake during the prohibition period. The Discharger has made efforts to meet discharge prohibitions and permitted NPDES effluent limits. Efforts have included: replacement of piping in the sanitary sewer collection system (e.g., sewer crossings, laterals, mainlines, and submains), construction of wetland ponds, placement of circulators in the stabilization ponds, and installation of groundwater monitoring wells. However, improvements to the Facility's treatment components have not resulted in complete compliance with WDRs. For example, inadequately treated wastewater is discharged to Lake Almanor when storage capacity is at an operational maximum. As such, additional treatment facilities and/or additional source control measures must be implemented to meet technology and water quality based effluent limits. The proposed CDO does not simply require the Discharger continue making repairs to the collection system to reduce I/I.

The proposed CDO also provides a compliance schedule with interim milestones to assist the Discharger in seeking out engineered alternatives and solutions for achieving compliance with current/future technology and water quality based limits.

ISSUES: Comments received from the Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA). The proposed orders were revised in response to the comments. Response from CVCWA is pending.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the proposed orders.

Mgmt. Review__BJS_____
Legal Review___SY_____

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