

**16 FEBRUARY 2024 BOARD MEETING
UNCONTESTED AGENDA ITEM**

AGENDA ITEM: 13

INITIAL STUDY AND NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR CITY OF LEMOORE AND LEPRINO FOODS COMPANY, RIVER RANCH RECYCLED WATER PROJECT, KINGS COUNTY

SUBJECT:

Following is a Resolution to approve an Initial Study and adopt a Negative Declaration for the City of Lemoore and Leprino Foods Company River Ranch Recycled Water Project. The Initial Study and Negative Declaration support adoption of revised Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for increased flows and expansion of the land application area (LAA) for discharge of combined effluent from the City of Lemoore wastewater treatment facility and treated process water from the Leprino Foods Company's two cheese processing facilities in Lemoore.

BOARD ACTION:

Consideration of an Initial Study and Negative Declaration.

BACKGROUND:

Treated effluent from the City of Lemoore (City or Lemoore) and Leprino Foods Company (Leprino) cheese process waste combined and discharged to approximately 1,900 acres of farmland, owned by Leprino for irrigation of crops. The discharge is currently regulated by WDRs Order R5-2019-0008 which authorizes the discharge of up to 5.0 million gallons per day (mgd) of combined effluent from the City and Leprino for irrigation of crops.

On 6 May 2022, Leprino and the City submitted a Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) to increase the combined effluent discharge to Stone Ranch from 5.0 to 7.0 mgd (about a 40% increase). According to the 2022 RWD Leprino also purchased an adjacent 520 acres, known as the Nederend Property, to expand the LAA. The proposed discharge will be on approximately 2,400 acres of farmland, known as the River Ranch (comprised of the existing Stone Ranch and new Nederend properties).

As Lead Agency for the purposes of the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) the Central Valley Water Board entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Leprino and Environmental Science Associates (ESA) to coordinate preparation of an Initial Study for the Proposed Project. Based on the findings of the Initial Study a Negative Declaration was prepared.

The Initial Study and Negative Declaration were circulated for public comment on 15 November 2023 to interested parties and adjoining property owners. In addition, the documents were also posted at the Facilities, City offices, the Central Valley Water

Boards webpage, and the State Clearing House website. No comments were received during the 30-day comment period.

ISSUES

No comments were received.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Initial Study and Adopt the Negative Declaration.

REVIEWS:

Management Review:	ASM
Legal Review:	CBM 1/23/24

BOARD MEETING LOCATION:

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

AND VIA VIDEO AND TELECONFERENCE