

REGIONAL BOARD MEETING

State of California
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT
March 7, 2019, 10:00 a.m.

ITEM: 2

SUBJECT: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for the City of El Centro, El Centro Wastewater Treatment Plant – El Centro, CA, Imperial County (Renewal)

PURPOSE: Consideration of issuance of tentative Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order R7-2019-0002 for NPDES permit renewal.

BACKGROUND:

The City of El Centro owns and operates the El Centro Wastewater Treatment Plant (Facility). The El Centro Wastewater Treatment Plant services a population of approximately 43,200. The current total design capacity of the wastewater treatment plant is 8.0 million gallons per day (MGD). The discharge consists of disinfected secondary treated wastewater. Wastewater from the community is pumped from seven lift stations to a final lift station, from which it is pumped to preliminary treatment where solids are removed by an automatic bar screen. Manual injection of ferric chloride and polymer is added to the process at the main lift station to remove metals from the wastewater. Wastewater is then directed through the plant's primary clarifiers. Secondary treatment is achieved through biological treatment via six aeration basins and secondary clarification through four final clarifiers. The wastewater is then disinfected using ultraviolet (UV) light before being discharged to the Central Main Drain.

Primary sludge generated from the primary clarifiers is pumped to anaerobic digesters. Secondary sludge generated from the secondary clarifiers is processed through a gravity belt thickener, with the de-watered sludge sent to the anaerobic digesters. Following anaerobic digestion, sludge is directed through a belt press, dried to approximately 90 percent solids in drying beds and then land-applied at locations in Arizona. The Facility maintains an emergency storage basin for use during cleaning of the UV disinfection channel or plant malfunction.

Existing WDRs Order R7-2014-0002 will expire on 5/31/2019. The Discharger filed a report of waste discharge and submitted an application for reissuance of its WDRs and NPDES permit on September 12, 2018.

CURRENT STATUS:

The Discharger currently operates under Order No. R7-2014-0002, which allows the discharge of 8.0 MGD of disinfected secondary treated wastewater from Discharge Point 001 to Central Main Drain, a water of the United States, tributary to the Alamo River.

The Discharger had several effluent limitation violations for indicator bacteria as mandatory minimum penalties (MMPs). To address the MMPs, the Discharger entered into a Settlement Agreement and Stipulation for Entry of Administrative Civil Liability Order (“Stipulation”), which was adopted by the Colorado River Basin Water Board as Administrative Civil Liability Order No. R7-2015-0016.

PROPOSED CHANGES:

The Order sets new effluent limitations and monitoring requirements for mercury. The Order also incorporates up-to-date requirements of the Colorado River Basin Region’s Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) as well as federal and state laws, including USEPA's California Toxics Rule, as well as the State Water Board's *Policy for Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California*.

ISSUES:

No issues have been identified.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A comment was received from the Discharger via email dated February 11, 2019. No comments have been received from the public and/or governmental agencies.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS:

The comment received by the Discharger on February 11, 2019 has been addressed. The comment states that the Treatment Basin Specifications described in the tentative WDRs are not applicable to the Facility. The proposed order has been revised by deleting the Treatment Basin Specifications accordingly.

If further substantive comments are received, the comments, responses to the comments, and any proposed changes to the tentative WDRs Order R7-2019-0002 will be summarized for consideration by the Board.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt proposed Order R7-2019-0002.