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May 24, 2018

Ms. Deborah Smith  
Executive Officer  
California Regional Water Quality Board – Los Angeles  
320 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

**Tentative WDR Juanita Millender Mc-Donald  
Carson Regional Water Recycling Plant  
Reverse Osmosis Brine Permit NPDES #CA006246  
West Basin Municipal Water District Comments**

Dear Ms. Smith:

West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments regarding the West Basin tentative Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) for the Juanita Millender Mc-Donald Carson Regional Water Recycling Plant (Carson) located in Carson, CA (NPDES #CA006246).

West Basin is a wholesaler of imported potable water and producer of recycled water. West Basin has invested heavily in water recycling since the 1990s producing five qualities of recycled water for beneficial reuse including disinfected tertiary Title 22. This water, which is produced at the Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility (ECLWRF) in El Segundo, is distributed throughout West Basin's service area. The water is served to schools, golf courses, playgrounds as well as in dual plumbed facilities before reaching the Carson plant for further advanced treatment for nearby refinery cooling towers and boilers. The following comments are for your consideration:

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

West Basin requires reasonable relief on timing of permits, or at minimum, flexibility with deadlines within permits.

West Basin submitted the application for this permit renewal as required on time - 180 days prior to the expiration date. The application for reissuance was submitted on August 3, 2017 and was deemed complete on September 20, 2017. West Basin also submitted a permit renewal application for the ECLWRF Brine (CA0063401) as required back on June 23, 2016 which was deemed complete on July 21, 2016.

Despite West Basin's timely submittal of renewal applications nearly two years apart, both the ECLWRF and this Carson permit have been scheduled for adoption on the same date. This will result in implementation on the same date and the proposed ten special studies, work plans or program documents are currently all due at the same time. The renewal packages will also be due concurrently. This creates a challenge between balancing staff time and duties, as well presenting a challenge to budgeting of public dollars each fiscal year. West Basin requests relief in this situation and urges the Board to delay the effective date of this Carson brine permit for West Basin until January 1, 2019 at a minimum. If West Basin's request is not allowed under statute or regulation, then allowing the plans or program documents in the permit to be submitted within one year (instead of 90 days) would be reasonable while still ensuring protection of water quality.

## **POTW LANGUAGE**

There are several requirements in the tentative permit that are directed toward POTWs (Publicly Owned Treatment Works). The permit explicitly includes language discussing how to treat or clean up untreated wastewater or sewage. Carson is an advanced water treatment supply plant and does not have any sewage or untreated wastewater on its site. Carson treats already permitted disinfected tertiary Title 22 water (File No. 94-062, CI 01-7453) as its feed source, which is already permitted for use at schools and in dual plumbed facilities. Please delete the below references along with their POTW requirements:

### **1. P 21 VI.C.3.b – Spill Clean-up Contingency Plan (SCCP)**

Requirements for SCCC are not applicable to this facility. This requirement in the tentative order states this plan is necessary to address "...bypasses of untreated wastewater from the Discharger's influent system..." This facility does not receive untreated wastewater nor have a need to bypass. Furthermore, spill clean-up protocols exist and are filed with the Los Angeles Certified Unified Participating Agencies, in addition to being outlined in the SWPPP required by the industrial stormwater program in which West Basin enrolled on May 23, 2018.

### **2. Page F-35 – Spill Clean Up Contingency Plan**

West Basin requests removal of this plan as it also relates to a POTW. This section explicitly refers twice to the clean-up of sewage. There is no sewage at the Carson Plant. The Carson plant is an advanced water treatment facility purifying already treated water. References to sewage should be removed from the document.

## **LOS ANGELES COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS RECEIVING WATER MONITORING**

The tentative permit states on page 10, "The receiving water monitoring is conducted by the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD) to ensure that the mixture of JWPCP [Joint Water Pollution Control Plant] effluent and Carson brine discharge is in compliance with receiving water limitations and to characterize the water quality of the receiving water." For consistency, and to clarify that West Basin does not have any bacteriological monitoring responsibilities at the outfalls in the ocean, please delete the following:

- Section V.A. - in its entirety, from page 11 – 13.
- Page 7, IV.A.1.c – refers to the JWPCP's limits for bacteria at shoreline compliance points. However, West Basin does not have access to these points.
- Pages 10-12 and 19–20 - refer to LA County's monitoring of surface receiving water. This is a permit for the Carson Plant and therefore this language should be omitted.
- Page E-3, I.L.1–2 - This section discusses bacteria limits which are the purview of the JWPCP.

## **TOXICITY**

### **1. Page E-12 V.B.4**

The first species sensitivity screening test under this tentative permit, is to be conducted during the permit's first required sampling period which would be in September 2018. However, the current permit dictates that a most sensitive test be conducted in August 2018. During 2017, extensive 3 species testing (five sets of samples) was done which resulted in kelp being the most sensitive species. Since testing will occur in August 2018 for the most sensitive species (kelp), West Basin requests that the first toxicity testing under the tentative order begin the following year – in August of 2019. This schedule would require the three species rescreening testing be done in 2019, 2021, and 2023, which would align better with the reissuance process. West Basin has been conducting toxicity testing during the past two permits, therefore this rescheduling would seem appropriate and allow for relief in the above discussed compacted schedules of multiple permits, while still protecting water quality and the environment.

2. Attachment G

Toxicity Reduction Evaluation for POTW should be deleted as the Carson plant is not a POTW.

3. Page E-11.

The Tentative draft refers to language in the Order for JWPCP. For clarity and to avoid confusion, West Basin requests that the specifications and requirements be listed in the tentative permit instead of another agency's permit.

4. Page E-10 – Remove Chronic Toxicity Test

Carson WRP brine does not exhibit potential for chronic toxicity. The requirements for toxicity testing are significant and its inclusion in this permit is not consistent with the finding on page E – 10 that “..the Carson WRP does not show reasonable potential for chronic toxicity.” The amount of brine that is the final effluent from JWPCP is 0.48%. This very small percentage of the effluent, as well as the fact that historically the brine has never shown any significant effects to plant, animal or invertebrate populations, makes it reasonable to request that this requirement be removed.

5. Undisinfected Secondary Effluent Page E-11, V.B.1

The tentative permit specifies using undisinfected secondary effluent from the JWPCP for toxicity testing – the current existing permit calls for secondary effluent. JWPCP uses disinfected secondary effluent for compliance with their NPDES permit (and dechlorinates it as allowed under the permit). The JWPCP does not collect composite samples of undisinfected effluent for compliance. Therefore, West Basin asks for the removal of the requirement for undisinfected secondary effluent from the JWPCP for toxicity testing from the tentative permit, if toxicity testing is not removed from the order entirely.

## **SAMPLING**

1. Sampling Seven Days a Week

The Carson Plant is a satellite facility which is remotely operated from the ECLWRF Control Room. Operators are on-site at Carson five days a week on a rotating basis. The only days that consistently have operators on site are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The requirement to have effluent sampling on a different day of the week every month presents a staffing challenge particularly on weekends without full staffing or lab operation. Due to some very short holding times (pH, Total Suspended Solids, nitrate, chlorine residual, temperature) samples could not be collected Saturday or Sunday and still be analyzed within holding times. West Basin requests this footnote 5 on page E-5 instead say to rotate samples Monday - Friday only.

2. Influent Sampling Page E-4

The location for influent sampling is listed as the ECLWRF in El Segundo. West Basin suggests the influent sample point be located at the actual Carson Plant. West Basin believes this would provide a better and more accurate representation of the influent water.

3. Peak Flow Page E-5

The flow demand for the refinery Carson services is not predictably cyclical, but rather is based on a fairly consistent refinery demand. Exact peak flow is not known until the end of the day, and the timing may vary from day to day. Collecting oil and grease and TSS grabs at peak flow over a 24 hour period would be challenging since flows for the recycled water are based on customer demand and not known ahead of time. In addition, operators are not at this facility 24/7. West Basin requests the “peak flow” language to be removed from the permit and instead samples be taken during a specific window of time when flows may be typically higher.

#### 4. New USEPA Method for Mercury sampling Page E-6

The method listed for sampling mercury, USEPA Method 1631E, would require the purchase of a new expensive piece of equipment or utilizing a subcontract lab to perform this costly analysis. West Basin currently uses EPA method 200.8 which is an industry wide method utilized with accurate results. Therefore, West Basin requests being able to continue to use standard analytical method EPA 200.8.

#### 5. PCB's Page E-9

Footnote 14 on E-9 requires the use of USEPA Method 1668c and 608 for PCBS as congeners. The use of method 1668c, which is not a part of 40 CFR 136, is for informational purposes only. Rather, it is to help assess concentrations in the receiving waters. Testing using 1668c is costly and West Basin is not responsible for testing in the receiving waters – it is the responsibility of LACSD. Therefore, West Basin requests the requirement for testing PCBs with both methods be changed to testing only by standard method 608.

### DILUTION

#### 1. Dilution Factor Page 6, footnote 3

The dilution factor of 24,070 is based on the maximum flow from Carson diluted by the lowest JWPCP effluent flow (between 2012 and 2016), and diluted again coming out of the outfall. The most conservative dilution factor for Outfall 004 (the 60" outfall) was used in this calculation, which is the lowest value for all of the outfalls. However, Outfall 004 is rarely used - the Discharge Prohibitions in the permit specify that discharge to Outfalls 003 and 004 is prohibited except under rare circumstances (emergencies, preventative maintenance, or major capital improvement projects when there is no other feasible alternative). It seems more reasonable to use the dilution factor from Outfalls 001 and 002, which yields an overall dilution factor of 34,700. West Basin requests the dilution factor be changed to reflect more accurately the outfalls that are used for discharge of the Carson brine, resulting in a dilution factor of 34,700.

### BRINE DISCHARGE DATA COMPARISON STUDY

Instead of performing the grab versus composite study described on page 19, (2.b), West Basin would like to recommend that the described sampling at Carson be done by composite as originally suggested by RWQCB staff.

### ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

Below are some administrative changes West Basin would like the RWQCB to review:

1. TRE – the first word in paragraph should be changed from **If** to **when** VI.C.2.a (page 18)

2. Page F-6, Facility Description, please amend first paragraph to:

The Discharger is a public agency that provides wholesale water to local utility companies and municipal water departments within its service area. The Discharger provides potable water and recycled water to 17 cities and unincorporated areas of southwest Los Angeles County. The **Plant** is owned by the Discharger and is located at 21029 South Wilmington Avenue, Carson, California. The **Plant produces advanced-treated recycled water from a feed source of distributed disinfected tertiary Title 22 water from ECLWRF. The disinfected tertiary feed source is also used at schools, golf courses, parks and medians through-out the District, as well as for dual plumbed toilets, before reaching the Plant.** The **disinfected tertiary Title 22** recycled water is continuously treated by microfiltration and reverse osmosis **for refinery boiler feed**, or by nitrification at the **Plant for refinery cooling towers**. The reverse osmosis brine is the only waste stream produced at the **Plant** that discharges to the Pacific Ocean (see section II.B of Attachment F for detailed information), via the JWPCP outfalls, a water of the United States. Storm water runoff is discharged to the County of Los Angeles storm drain system tributary to the Dominguez Channel Estuary, a water of the United States. All other wastes from the treatment processes at the Facility are discharged to the sanitary sewer.

3. Page F-7, II.A.2. – please correct paragraph to:

Biosolids are only processed at the Edward C. Little Water Recycling **Facility**, not at the Carson WRP. Since the Carson WRP only processes **disinfected** tertiary-treated **Title 22** recycled water, biosolids requirements were not included in this Order.

4. Page F-22, under Table F-7, please change to:

Since the influent is **disinfected** tertiary treated **Title 22 permitted** recycled water from the E.C. Little Water Recycling **Facility** and the effluent from the Carson WRP is brine, requiring 75% TSS removal efficiency is not appropriate for the Carson WRP. As permitted in the 2015 Ocean Plan, since the monthly effluent limitation included in this Order for TSS is 60 mg/L, the Discharger is not required to remove the 75% of suspended solids from the influent stream before discharge to the ocean. All other effluent limitations established in the 2015 Ocean Plan have been included in the Order.

5. Page 18, VI.C.2.a – please revise paragraph to:

If the discharger consistently exceeds the water quality objective for toxicity or an effluent limitation for an Ocean Plan Table B water quality objective specified in IV.A.1, the Discharger shall conduct a Toxicity Reduction Evaluation (TRE) defined in Attachment A. The TRE shall include all reasonable steps to identify the source of toxicity. The Discharger shall take all reasonable steps to reduce toxicity to the required level once the source of toxicity is identified.

The Discharger shall prepare and submit a copy of the Discharger's initial investigation TRE work plan in accordance with Monitoring and Reporting Program section V **if the above conditions are met.**

6. Page F-4, I.B – please correct paragraph to:

The Facility discharges reverse osmosis brine waste, after being mixed with JWPCP effluent, to the Pacific Ocean **via JWPCP lines** and storm water runoff into the Dominguez Channel, both of which are waters of the United States. The Discharger was previously regulated by Order No. R4-2013-0046 and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CA0064246 adopted on March 7, 2013, and expired on February 10, 2018, but was administratively extended until the adoption of this Order. Attachment B provides a map of the area around the Facility, Attachment C1 provides a site layout of the Facility, and Attachment C2 provides a flow schematic of the Facility.

7. Stormwater

West Basin does not agree with the assessment that this satellite plant must comply with stormwater requirements because it contains 'wastewater' equipment. However, per understanding with Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board staff discussions, West Basin agreed to enroll in the Industrial Stormwater Program general permit on May 23, 2018 under the condition that all the stormwater monitoring language is removed from the tentative RO Brine permit.

West Basin is dedicated to protecting its communities and the environment and grateful for the continued professional working relationship with RWQCB staff. West Basin is committed to the Governor's proclamation and legislative requirements to address changing climates and prolonged drought conditions by producing alternative sources of water which can only be done through our collaborative processes. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on ways to refine permit language in the tentative permit to continue to make recycled water a viable source of our water future.

Sincerely,



Patrick Sheilds  
General Manager

Cc: Cris Morris, LARWQCB  
Eric Owens, WBMWD