



Media Release

San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board Acts to Stop the Flow of “Nurdles” to California Waters

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San Leandro-The San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) has issued an expanded Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) to four Bay Area plastics handling businesses (dischargers). The CAO requires the businesses to clean up and stop the discharge of preproduction plastic pellets, commonly known as “nurdles”, to a San Leandro wetland.

Nurdles are tiny pellets of plastic which are melted and molded into a variety of plastic products ranging from automobile bumpers to plastic bags to water bottles. These pellets can be as small as one millimeter in diameter. Preproduction plastic also comes in powdered and sheet forms.

The sites affected by this CAO are currently operated by:

- Foamex, Incorporated, at 2451 Polvorosa Drive
- E-Poly Star, Incorporated, at 2085 Burroughs Avenue
- Metro Poly, Incorporated, at 1651 Aurora Drive
- UniPoly, Incorporated, at 2020 Williams Street

Kaneka Texas Corporation and Dude, Incorporated are also named in connection with the Polvorosa Drive site, because they collectively owned or own the property. This CAO was expanded from coverage of Kaneka Texas and Dude, Incorporated to include the other dischargers named above. All locations are within the City of San Leandro, Alameda County.

The companies named in the CAO all discharge through storm drains into a wetland (tidal marsh) on the southeastern edge of Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline. This wetland is home to at least five endangered species including the California Clapper Rail, the California Least Tern and the California Tiger Salamander.

Nurdles closely resemble fish eggs and small snails. They are suspected in the deaths of up to a million sea creatures a year. Researchers report that in some parts of the “Great Pacific Garbage Pile” (Northern Pacific Gyre) nurdles outnumber plankton.



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Discharges of nurdles are generally believed to be accidental. In the cases listed in this CAO the responsible parties will be expected to pay reasonable cleanup and abatement costs at their sites and in the affected wetland. They must also be covered by the Industrial Storm Water General Permit. There are no fines or other penalties proposed at this time.

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore California's water resources and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.