# CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SUBSTITUTE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT REPORT FOR BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT REGARDING ONSITE WASTEWATER SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (RESOLUTION NO. R3-2009-0012)

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Central Coast Water Board) is proposing an amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan, Central Coast Basin* (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan serves as the cornerstone for protection of waters of the State through identification of beneficial uses of surface and ground waters, establishment of water quality objectives to protect beneficial uses, and establishment of an implementation plan to achieve those objectives.

The California Resources Agency has certified the Basin Planning process as an exempt regulatory program for the purposes of complying with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines [§15251, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR)]. The Water Board is exempt from the requirement to prepare an environmental impact report or negative declaration. Any Regional Board exempt regulatory program must satisfy the documentation requirements of §3775(a), Title 23, CCR. This Report constitutes a substitute environmental document as set forth in §3775(a), Title 23, CCR. It contains the following:

- 1. A description of proposed activity and proposed alternatives,
- 2. An environmental checklist and a description of the proposed activity,
- 3. An environmental evaluation, and
- 4. A determination with respect to significant environmental impacts.

The environmental analysis contained in this Report for Basin Plan Amendment and accompanying documents, including the Environmental Checklist, the staff report and the responses to comments complies with the requirements of the State Water Board's certified regulatory process, as set forth in CCR, Title 23, §3775 et seq. All public comments were considered.

# I. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The purpose of this Resolution is to revise the Basin Plan sections pertaining to onsite wastewater system requirements and implementation of such requirements. This section describes the changes proposed and alternatives to this proposal.

Historically, discharges from conventional onsite wastewater systems have been regulated by local permitting agencies (cities and counties). The Central Coast Water Board's general waiver of waste discharge requirements for such systems was implemented through multi-agency memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and local permitting agencies implemented Basin Plan criteria for onsite systems through their own permits. Pursuant to Water Code §13269(b)(2), the Central Coast Water Board's general waiver for discharges from onsite wastewater systems expired on June 30, 2004. Since expiration of the waiver, discharges from onsite systems have not been formally authorized by the Central Coast Water Board. Formal discharge authorization is required pursuant to California Water Code §13264. The

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proposed Resolution No. R3-2009-0012 establishes regulatory oversight, management, and monitoring of onsite systems in a manner that is clear, streamlined and protective of water quality.

By adopting the proposed resolution, Water Board oversight of onsite system discharges will be streamlined and clarified in a manner expected to result in improved long-term water quality protection in areas served by onsite wastewater systems. The proposed resolution is also expected to improve consistency and customer service reducing the need for staff resources utilized in a manner redundant with local jurisdictions. Adoption of the proposed resolution will complete a Triennial Review list priority task, which has been backlogged for many years.

#### Alternatives to this Project

1. Adoption of an alternative implementation program

The Central Coast Water Board could adopt an implementation program for onsite wastewater systems with conditions different from those proposed. This alternative is not recommended as it could result in implementation of only some of the Basin Plan criteria for onsite wastewater systems and would not achieve the goals of effective long-term water quality protection in a clear and efficient manner. Adoption of a different implementation program can only be addressed relative to specified alternate proposals. Such discussion is addressed in the response to comments included in the staff report. This alternative is not recommended.

2. Adopt individual or general waste discharge requirements

The Central Coast Water Board could adopt individual or general waste discharge requirements for onsite wastewater systems. This alternative is not recommended. Individual waste discharge requirements would overwhelm the staff resources as there are many thousands of such systems in the Region. General waste discharge requirements are not necessary because the local agencies are best situated to regulate onsite wastewater systems in compliance with the Basin Plan. The proposed conditional waiver in the implementation program requires compliance with Basin Plan criteria, providing appropriate protection of waters of the state.

3. Take no action

Formal discharge authorization is required pursuant to California Water Code §13264. Currently, no such authorization is in place. If no action is taken, the current situation would continue, which does not provide adequate protection of water quality or compliance with the California Water Code. This alternative is not recommended.

#### II. APPLICABLE INFORMATON

#### 1. Lead Agency Name and Address

Central Coast Water Board 895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7906

# 2. Contact Person and Phone Number: Sorrel Marks (805) 549-3595

3. Project Location: Central Coast Region

# 4. Project Sponsor's Name and Address

Central Coast Water Board 895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7906

#### 5. Other Public Agencies whose Approval is Required

State Water Resources Control Board approval is required for this Basin Plan amendment. Although formal approval by local jurisdictions is not required for Basin Plan amendments, cooperative implementation by local permitting authorities (cities, counties, community services districts) is necessary to effectively protect water quality. Local jurisdictions likely to be affected by the proposed project include: Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura Counties, and the cities and special districts therein.

#### **III. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

A significant effect on the environment is defined in regulation as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. A social or economic change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant (14 CCR section 15382)."

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1.	AESTHETICS Would the project:				
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				$\boxtimes$
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings with a state scenic highway?				
c)	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings				$\boxtimes$
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area				$\boxtimes$
2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may					

	ς.	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ref	er to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and		incorporation		
	e Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the				
Ca	lifornia Dept. of Conservation as an optional model				
to	use in assessing impacts on agriculture and				
far	mland. Would the project:				
a)	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or				
	Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as		· _ ·	_	_
	shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland				$\square$
	Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California				
	Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				
b)	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a				
	Williamson Act contract?				
C)	Involve other changes in the existing environment			í –	
	which, due to their location or nature, could result in				
2	conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use? AIR QUALITY Where available, the significance				
	teria established by the applicable air quality				
	nagement or air pollution control district may be				
	ied upon to make the following determinations.				
	build the project:				
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the				
<b>_</b>	applicable air quality plan?				
b)	Violate any air quality standard or contribute				
'	substantially to an existing or projected air quality				$\square$
	violation?				
c)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of				
	any criteria pollutant for which the project region is not				
	attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient				$\boxtimes$
	air quality standard (including releasing emissions				
	which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone				
	precursors)?				
d)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant				$\boxtimes$
	concentrations?				
e)	Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial				$\boxtimes$
4	number of people?				
4.	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:				
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified				
	as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in				
	local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the				
	California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish				
	and Wildlife Service?				
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian				
<b>_</b>	habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in				
	local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the				$\boxtimes$
	California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish				
1	and Wildlife Service?				
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected				
`	wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water				
	Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool,				$\square$
	coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological				

# Resolution No. R3-2009-0012 Attachment C

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	interruption, or other means?		incorporation		
d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native				
	resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with				_
	established native resident or migratory wildlife				$\square$
	corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery				
e)	sites? Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting				
	biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy				$\boxtimes$
	or ordinance?				
f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat				
<b>`</b>	Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation				
	Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat				$\boxtimes$
	conservation plan?				
5.	CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:				
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?				$\boxtimes$
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance				
0,	of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?				$\boxtimes$
c)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological				
'	resource or site or unique geologic feature?				$\boxtimes$
d)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred				$\square$
	outside of formal cemeteries?				
6.	GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:			•	:
a)	Expose people or structures to potential substantial				
	adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or				$\boxtimes$
	<ul><li>death involving:</li><li>i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated</li></ul>				
	on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault				
	Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the				
	area or based on other substantial evidence of a				$\boxtimes$
	known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and				
	Geology Special Publication 42.				
	ii) Strong seismic ground shaking				$\square$
	iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including				$\boxtimes$
	iv) Landslides?				
b)	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				
(c)	Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or				
0	that would become unstable as a result of the project,		_		<u> </u>
	and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral				$\boxtimes$
	spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				
d)	Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-			_	
	B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating				$\boxtimes$
$\vdash$	substantial risks to life or property				
e)	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use				
	of septic tanks or alternative waste-water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the				$\boxtimes$
	disposal of waste water?				
7.					
	ould the project:				
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the				$\square$



#### Resolution No. R3-2009-0012 Attachment C

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	Ño Impact
	environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				$\boxtimes$
C)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				$\boxtimes$
d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				
g)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				. 🛛
h)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				··
8.	HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the oject:				
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?				
·b)	Substantially deplete ground water supplies or interfere substantially with ground water recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local ground water table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?				
d)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?				
e)	Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed				$\boxtimes$

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		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?				
<b>f</b> )	Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?				$\boxtimes$
g)	Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				$\boxtimes$
h)	Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				$\boxtimes$
i)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?		<u> </u>		$\boxtimes$
j)	Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				$\boxtimes$
9.	LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:				
a)	Physically divide an established community?				$\boxtimes$
<b>b</b> )	Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				
c)	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				
10.	MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:				
a)	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				, X
b)	Result in the loss of availability of a locally –important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan; specific plan or other land use plan?				$\boxtimes$
11.	NOISE – Would the project result in:				
a)	Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				$\boxtimes$
b)	Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				$\boxtimes$
c)	A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				$\boxtimes$
_ d)	A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				$\boxtimes$
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in				$\boxtimes$

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	the project area to excessive noise levels?				
12.	POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:				
a)	Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				
b)	Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				$\boxtimes$
c)	Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				
13.	PUBLIC SERVICES – Would the project:				
a)	Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				۲
	Fire protection?				$\square$
	Police protection?				
	Schools?				
	Parks?		- H		
	Other public facilities?				
14	RECREATION – Would the project:				
a)	Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				
b)	Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				
	TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC Would the project:				
a)	Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?				
b)	Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				$\boxtimes$
c)	Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				$\boxtimes$
d)	Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				$\boxtimes$
e)	Result in inadequate emergency access?				$\square$

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		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f)	Result in inadequate parking capacity?				$\square$
g)	Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				
	UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the oject:				
a)	Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				$\boxtimes$
b)	Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				$\boxtimes$
C)	Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				$\boxtimes$
d)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				$\boxtimes$
e)	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				
f)	Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				, 🛛
g)	Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				$\boxtimes$
17.	MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				$\boxtimes$
a)	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?				
b)	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?				$\boxtimes$
c)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				

**IV. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION DISCUSSION** (of checklist questions answered Potentially Significant Impact, Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation, or Less than Significant Impact).

The Water Board concludes that adoption of an implementation program that conditionally waives waste discharge requirements and reports of waste discharge for onsite wastewater systems will not have a significant impact on the environment. The Water Board will not authorize waivers of waste discharge requirements for new discharges except where the local governing jurisdiction has approved development after complying with CEQA and incorporating appropriate mitigation measures. The Water Board does not have jurisdiction to approve development, but only to regulate discharges of waste. There is no information available to the Water Board, other than speculation, that the adoption of the Implementation Program establishing a conditional waiver will result in more or less development. The Water Board also concludes that the adoption of revised onsite wastewater system criteria will not have a significant impact on the environment. The revised criteria establish more stringent conditions regulating onsite wastewater systems and will result in protection of waters of the state. The Basin Plan criteria, if implemented, are protective of water quality.

Reasonably foreseeable means of compliance, costs associated with such compliance, and resulting environmental impacts have also been considered and are addressed in the Staff Report.

#### V. PRELIMINARY STAFF DETERMINATION

- The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and, therefore, no alternatives or mitigation measures are proposed.
- The proposed project MAY have a significant or potentially significant effect on the environment, and therefore alternatives and mitigation measures have been evaluated.

Signature

Date

Roger W. Briggs

Printed Name

For