

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL VALLEY REGION

In the matter of:)

Joyce Gravance)

Order No. R5-2012-0506

Administrative Civil Liability)
Complaint No. R5-2011-0559)

Settlement Agreement and Stipulation
for Entry of Order; Order

Section I: INTRODUCTION

This Settlement Agreement and Stipulation for Entry of Administrative Civil Liability Order ("Stipulated Order" or "Order") is entered into by and between the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region ("Central Valley Water Board"), on behalf of the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Staff ("Prosecution Staff"), and Joyce Gravance (the "Discharger") (Prosecution Team and Discharger are collectively, the "Parties") and is presented to the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee, for adoption as an order by settlement, pursuant to Government Code section 11415.60.

Section II: RECITALS

1. Joyce Gravance owns and the former Frank Mendes Dairy, located at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Laton, California, County of Fresno. On 3 May 2007, the Central Valley Water Board issued the Waste Discharge Requirements General Order for Existing Milk Cow Dairies, Order R5-2007-0035 (hereinafter General Order) and the General Order's corresponding Monitoring and Reporting Program. The General Order became effective on 9 May 2007. The former Frank Mendes Dairy is regulated by the General Order, and the General Order names both the owner and operator as "the Discharger."
2. On 5 May 2011, the Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board issued Administrative Civil Liability Complaint No. R5-2011-0559 ("Complaint") to the Discharger. The Complaint recommends imposing an administrative civil liability totaling \$11,400 for alleged violations of the General Order. The Complaint was issued as to both Joyce Gravance and Frank Mendes, the dairy operator. Following issuance of the Complaint, the discharger learned that Frank Mendes had filed for bankruptcy on April 6, 2010. The filing of bankruptcy and automatic stay of creditor claims by the federal bankruptcy court pre-dates assessment of penalties for alleged violations cited

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in the Complaint, and precludes the prosecution team from seeking financial penalties from Mr. Mendes. The Complaint was amended to remove Frank Mendes on June 7, 2011.

3. The Prosecution Staff and owner engaged in settlement negotiations and agree to settle the violations cited in the Complaint without administrative or civil litigation and by presenting this Stipulated Order to the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee, for adoption as an order by settlement pursuant to Government Code section 11415.60. The Prosecution Staff believes that the resolution of the alleged violations is fair and reasonable and fulfills its enforcement objectives, that no further action is warranted concerning the violations alleged in the Complaint except as provided in this Stipulated Order and that this Stipulated Order is in the best interest of the public.

4. To resolve the violations alleged in the Complaint by consent and without further administrative proceedings, the Parties have agreed to the imposition of \$4,000 in liability against the owner. This represents an adjusted liability amount consisting of a \$11,000 reduction as described in the Complaint. The reduction in liability from the amount proposed in the Complaint is based on a showing by the Discharger that they do not have the financial capability to pay the liability amount of \$11,400, as proposed in the Complaint, the absence of an economic benefit to the discharger from a failure to submit the required reports, and a determination that the imposition of higher liability would result in significant inequities given the degree of culpability of the Discharger.

Section III: STIPULATIONS

The Parties stipulate to the following:

5. **Administrative Civil Liability:** The Discharger hereby agrees to the imposition of an administrative civil liability totaling \$4,000. Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Order, the owner agrees to remit, by check, FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$4,000.00), payable to the *State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account*, and shall indicate on the check the number of this Order. The Discharger shall send the original signed check to Clay Rodgers, Central Valley Water Board 1685 "E" Street, Fresno, California 93706-2007, and shall send a copy to Ellen Howard, Office of Enforcement, State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), 1001 "I" Street, 16th Floor, Sacramento, California 95814.

6. **Submission of a Closure Plan:** The Discharger agrees to submit a completed, closure plan for the dairy to the Regional Board by September 1, 2011. The closure plan will meet the requirements of the General Order and is subject to staff approval.

7. **Compliance with Applicable Laws:** The Discharger understands that payment of administrative civil liability in accordance with the terms of this Stipulated Order and or compliance with the terms of this Stipulated Order is not a substitute for compliance with applicable laws, and that continuing violations of the type alleged in the Complaint may subject it to further enforcement, including additional administrative civil liability.

8. Party Contacts for Communications related to Stipulated Order:

For the Central Valley Water Board:

Clay Rodgers
Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
1685 "E" Street
Fresno, CA 93706-2007

For the Respondents:

Joyce Gravance
[REDACTED]
Laton, CA 93242

9. Attorney's Fees and Costs: Except as otherwise provided herein, each Party shall bear all attorneys' fees and costs arising from the Party's own counsel in connection with the matters set forth herein.

10. Matters Addressed by Stipulation: Upon the Central Valley Water Board's adoption of this Stipulated Order, this Order represents a final and binding resolution and settlement of the violations alleged in the Complaint, and all claims, violations or causes of action that could have been asserted against the owner or operator as of the effective date of this Stipulated Order based on the specific facts alleged in the Complaint or this Order ("Covered Matters"). The provisions of this Paragraph are expressly conditioned on the full payment of the administrative civil liability, in accordance with Paragraph 5.

11. Public Notice: The Discharger understands that this Stipulated Order will be noticed for a 30-day public review and comment period prior to consideration by the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee. If significant new information is received that reasonably affects the propriety of presenting this Stipulated Order to the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee, for adoption, the Executive Officer may unilaterally declare this Stipulated Order void and decide not to present it to the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee. The Discharger agrees that they may not rescind or otherwise withdraw their approval of this proposed Stipulated Order.

12. Addressing Objections Raised During Public Comment Period: The Parties agree that the procedure contemplated for the Central Valley Water Board's adoption of the settlement by the Parties and review by the public, as reflected in this Stipulated Order, will be adequate. In the event procedural objections are raised prior to the Stipulated Order becoming effective, the Parties agree to meet and confer concerning any such objections, and may agree to revise or adjust the procedure as necessary or advisable under the circumstances.

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13. No Waiver of Right to Enforce: The failure of the Prosecution Staff or Central Valley Water Board to enforce any provision of this Stipulated Order shall in no way be deemed a waiver of such provision, or in any way affect the validity of the Order. The failure of the Prosecution Staff or Central Valley Water Board to enforce any such provision shall not preclude it from later enforcing the same or any other provision of this Stipulated Order.

14. Interpretation: This Stipulated Order shall be construed as if the Parties prepared it jointly. Any uncertainty or ambiguity shall not be interpreted against any one Party.

15. Modification: This Stipulated Order shall not be modified by any of the Parties by oral representation made before or after its execution. All modifications must be in writing, signed by all Parties, and approved by the Central Valley Water Board.

16. If Order Does Not Take Effect: In the event that this Stipulated Order does not take effect because it is not approved by the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee, or is vacated in whole or in part by the State Water Board or a court, the Parties acknowledge that they expect to proceed to a contested evidentiary hearing before the Central Valley Water Board to determine whether to assess administrative civil liabilities for the underlying alleged violations, unless the Parties agree otherwise. The Parties agree that all oral and written statements and agreements made during the course of settlement discussions will not be admissible as evidence in the hearing. Notwithstanding objections on the admissibility of settlement discussions as evidence in a hearing, the Parties agree to waive any and all objections related to their efforts to settle this matter including, but not limited to:

- a. Objections related to prejudice or bias of any of the Central Valley Water Board members or their advisors and any other objections that are premised in whole or in part on the fact that the Central Valley Water Board members or their advisors were exposed to some of the material facts and the Parties' settlement positions as a consequence of reviewing the Stipulation and/or the Order, and therefore may have formed impressions or conclusions prior to any contested evidentiary hearing on the Complaint in this matter; or
- b. Laches or delay or other equitable defenses based on the time period for administrative or judicial review to the extent this period has been extended by these settlement proceedings.

17. Admission of Liability: In settling this matter, the Discharger admits to the findings in the Complaint, and recognize that this Order may be used as evidence of a prior enforcement action consistent with California Water Code (CWC) section 13327.

18. Waiver of Hearing: The Discharger has been informed of the rights provided by CWC section 13323(b), and hereby waive their right to a hearing before the Central Valley Water Board prior to the adoption of the Stipulated Order.

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- 19. Waiver of Right to Petition:** The Discharger hereby waives their right to petition the Central Valley Water Board's adoption of the Stipulated Order as written for review by the State Water Board, and further waive their rights, if any, to appeal the same to a California Superior Court and/or any California appellate level court.
- 20. Covenant Not to Sue:** The Discharger agrees to a covenant not to sue or pursue any administrative or civil claim(s) against any State Agency or the State of California, their officers, Board Members, employees, representatives, agents, or attorneys arising out of or relating to any Covered Matter.
- 21. Central Valley Water Board is Not Liable:** Neither the Central Valley Water Board members nor the Central Valley Water Board staff, attorneys, or representatives shall be liable for any injury or damage to persons or property resulting from acts or omissions by the Discharger, their directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives or contractors in carrying out activities pursuant to this Stipulated Order.
- 22. Authority to Bind:** Each person executing this Stipulated Order in a representative capacity represents and warrants that he or she is authorized to execute this Stipulated Order on behalf of and to bind the entity on whose behalf he or she executes the Order.
- 23. No Third Party Beneficiaries.** This Stipulated Order is not intended to confer any rights or obligations on any third party or parties, and no third party or parties shall have any right of action under this Stipulated Order for any cause whatsoever.
- 24. Effective Date:** This Stipulated Order shall be effective and binding on the Parties upon the date the Central Valley Water Board, or its delegee, enters the Order.
- 25. Counterpart Signatures:** This Stipulated Order may be executed and delivered in any number of counterparts, each of which when executed and delivered shall be deemed to be an original, but such counterparts shall together constitute one document.

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IT IS SO STIPULATED.

California Regional Water Quality Control Board Prosecution Staff
Central Valley Region

By: Clay L. Rodgers
for Pamela Creedon
Executive Officer

Date: 11/7/11

By: Joyce Gravance
Joyce Gravance

Date: Oct 29 2011

Order of the Central Valley Water Board

26. In adopting this Stipulated Order, the Central Valley Water Board or its delegee has considered, where applicable, each of the factors prescribed in CWC section 13327. The consideration of these factors is based upon information and comments obtained by the Central Valley Water Board's staff in investigating the allegations in the Complaint or otherwise provided to the Central Valley Water Board or its delegee by the Parties and members of the public. In addition to these factors, this settlement recovers the costs incurred by the staff of the Central Valley Water Board for this matter.

27. This is an action to enforce the laws and regulations administered by the Central Valley Water Board. The Central Valley Water Board finds that issuance of this Order is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code, sections 21000 et seq.), in accordance with section 15321(a)(2), Title 14, of the California Code of Regulations.

28. The terms of the foregoing Stipulation are fully incorporated herein and made part of this Order of the Central Valley Water Board.

Pursuant to CWC section 13323 and Government Code section 11415.60, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region.



(Signature)

KENNETH D. LANDAU, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(Print Name and Title)

Date: 20 DECEMBER 2011

**PAYMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN
JOYCE GRAVANCE
FORMER FRANK MENDES DAIRY
AND
THE CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD
FOR ORDER R5-2012-0506**

Pursuant to proposed Stipulated Order R5-2012-0506 (attached), you have agreed to pay \$4,000 to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Cleanup and Abatement Account to resolve outstanding administrative civil liability for a failure to comply with Dairy General Order R5-2007-0035. Water Code section 13323, which governs the imposition of civil liability by the Central Valley Water Board, states, in relevant part, "[p]ayment shall be made not later than 30 days from the date on which the [Administrative Civil Liability] order is issued." When the Executive Officer executes the Stipulated Order, this action is functionally the same as the issuance of an Administrative Civil Liability Order. Therefore, the Central Valley Water Board has the right to demand full payment of the outstanding liability within 30 days of execution.

In order to resolve this matter, and in consideration of our settlement negotiations, the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team is amenable to you making four separate payments which will total \$4,000. If you make payments in accordance with the following time schedule, the Central Valley Water Board Prosecution Team will not seek to enforce the terms of Paragraph the Order that require payment of \$4,000 within 30 days from the date the Order is issued pursuant to Paragraph 5 of the Order, provided that the Discharger adheres to the following provisions:

1. The Discharger agrees to pay the outstanding liability in the amount of **four thousand dollars (\$4,000)**. Payments shall be made in four (4) quarterly installments of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). The first payment shall be made by **February 20, 2012**. Subsequent payments shall be due on May 20, 2012, August 20, 2012, and November 20, 2012.
2. The Permittee shall submit payment by cashiers or certified check made payable to the "State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account – Order No. R5-2012-0506."
3. Checks shall be submitted so that they are received by the Central Valley Water Board on or before 5 p.m. on the dates listed above, and the checks shall be submitted to:

California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region
Attn: Clay Rodgers
1685 E Street
Fresno, CA 93706

Should the Permittee fail to make any payment according to the agreed upon schedule above, the **remaining balance will be immediately due**. Should the Permittee fail to adhere to the payment schedule outlined above or fail to pay the remaining balance if a payment is missed, the Central Valley Water Board reserves the right to take any action permitted by law to collect the amount that remains outstanding.



Prosecution Team Representative

1/19/2012

Date