

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
CENTRAL VALLEY REGION

RESOLUTION NO. R5-2009-0028

IN SUPPORT OF REGIONALIZATION, RECLAMATION, RECYCLING AND  
CONSERVATION FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS

WHEREAS, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Regional Water Board) finds that:

1. The Water Quality Control Plans for the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River Basins and/or Tulare Lake Basin includes the following principles that relate to reclaimed water and consolidation of wastewater collection and treatment systems.
  - a. Municipal, agricultural, and industrial wastewaters must be considered as a potential integral part of the total available fresh water resource.
  - b. Coordinated management of water supplies and wastewaters on a regional basis must be promoted to achieve efficient utilization of water.
  - c. Regional solutions for wastewater collection and treatment must be considered in all cases where feasible and desirable to implement sound water quality management programs based upon long-range economic and water quality benefits to an entire basin.
  - d. Institutional and financial programs for implementation of consolidated wastewater management systems must be tailored to serve each particular area in an equitable manner.
  - e. Wastewater reclamation and reuse systems which assure maximum benefit from available fresh water resources shall be encouraged. Reclamation systems must be an appropriate integral part of the long-range solution to the water resources needs of an area and incorporate provisions for salinity control and disposal on non-reclaimable residues.
2. The State Water Board adopted Resolution No. 77-1, "Policy with Respect to Water Reclamation in California." Resolution No. 77-1 includes the principle that the State Water Board and Regional Water Boards shall encourage reclamation, reuse, and water conservation. The Legislature has also repeatedly expressed a strong policy favoring water recycling and reuse. (See, Water Code sections 13510-13511, 13576, 14051.)
3. The Strategic Plan Update 2008-2012 for the Water Boards includes a priority to increase sustainable local water supplies available for meeting existing and future beneficial uses by 1,725,000 acre-feet per year, in excess of 2002 levels, by 2015, and ensure adequate water flows for fish and wildlife habitat.

Reclamation and recycling of wastewaters, and conservation of the use of water supplies, will contribute to meeting this goal.

4. On 3 February 2009, the State Water Board adopted *A Policy for Water Quality Control for Recycled Water*. The policy, which will take effect after approval by the Office of Administrative Law, included the following goals for California:
  - a. Increase the use of recycled water over 2002 levels by at least one million acre-feet per year (afy) by 2020 and by at least two million afy by 2030.
  - b. Increase the use of stormwater over use in 2007 by at least 500,000 afy by 2020 and by at least one million afy by 2030.
  - c. Increase the amount of water conserved in urban and industrial uses by comparison to 2007 by at least 20 percent by 2020.
  - d. Included in these goals is the substitution of as much recycled water for potable water as possible by 2030.
5. In 1972 the federal Clean Water Act, Section 101 (a)(1) established a national goal to eliminate the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters. Minimizing wastewater generation through conservation, and minimizing discharge of wastewater to surface waters through reclamation and reuse, are consistent with this national goal.
6. The Regional Water Board has adopted the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River Basins (Sacramento/San Joaquin Basin Plan) and the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin (Tulare Lake Basin Plan).
7. The Sacramento/San Joaquin Basin Plan includes a wastewater reuse policy that encourages the reclamation and reuse of wastewater where practicable and requires as part of a Report of Waste Discharge an evaluation of reuse and land disposal options as alternative disposal methods. The Tulare Lake Basin Plan requires as part of a Report of Waste Discharge an evaluation of reuse and land disposal options as alternative disposal methods, and requires studies for new or expanded wastewater facilities that include plans for wastewater reclamation. Where these studies show that year-round or continuous reuse of all of the wastewater is not practicable, consideration must be given to partial reuse of the flow and seasonal reuse.
8. The Sacramento/San Joaquin Basin Plan prohibits the direct discharge of municipal and industrial wastes to specified water bodies, and discourages discharges of wastes into sloughs and streams with intermittent flow or dilution capacity.
9. The Tulare Lake Basin Plan specifies that municipal and domestic wastewater dischargers will be required to reclaim and reuse wastewater whenever

reclamation is feasible and includes a policy that discharges to surface waters will not be considered a permanent solution when the potential exists for wastewater reclamation.

10. Reducing discharges of wastewater into seasonal or ephemeral streams reduces habitat changes to the waterbodies that occur when wastewater is discharged into stream channels at locations, volumes or times when flow is not naturally present in the streams.
11. The Tulare Lake Basin Plan finds that reclaimed water provides a substitute source of water and provides nutrients that nourish crops. The Tulare Lake Basin Plan includes a policy that wastewater reclamation shall be maximized by controlling or limiting salt pickup and evaporation during use, treatment, or disposal.
12. The Tulare Lake Basin Plan finds that the proliferation of small treatment plants serving individual communities in developed areas is undesirable and most small communities do not have adequate resources to properly manage, treat and dispose of wastewater in an urban environment. The Tulare Lake Basin Plan includes the following policies:
  - Adjoining small communities should combine resources to construct and operate a joint or regional wastewater treatment plant.
  - Consolidation should be cost-effective, and consider benefits to the ecology, treatment efficiencies, and effective current and future reuse opportunities of the waters.
  - Unsewered areas and new developments adjacent to or within existing wastewater collection system service areas should be connected to the system. Developments not within a service area but within the projected sphere of influence of a regional collection system should be developed in a manner that provides for future connection to the system when it becomes available.
  - Each municipal collection and treatment facility should act as a regional facility and provide sewerage services within its sphere of influence. The municipality must be equitably compensated for these services.
13. State and federal antidegradation policies require Dischargers to demonstrate that degradation from new or expanded discharges are necessary, and to implement best practicable treatment or control of the discharge necessary to maintain the highest water quality consistent with maximum benefit to the people of the State. Regionalization, reclamation, recycling and conservation may enhance the implementation of these policies.

14. Evaluating regionalization, reclamation, recycling and/or conservation opportunities requires a balancing of these and many other considerations, including impacts to water quality, costs, authority to implement and other factors necessary to determine if regionalization, reclamation, recycling and/or conservation are feasible and practicable for the specific facility(ies).
15. The costs of constructing, expanding, upgrading and maintaining wastewater collection and treatment systems are large, and can be a severe impact on small communities and small economically disadvantaged communities. Increased rates on most communities, but especially for the small communities in particular, result in the likelihood of a successful Proposition 218 challenge to rate increases, which may make compliance with regulations and improvements in water quality difficult or impossible for some communities. While the capital investment for regionalization of wastewater collection and treatment systems may result in a higher initial cost than upgrading an existing facility to meet current day regulatory requirements, costs associated with meeting future regulatory requirements and system upgrades can be spread over a larger population and will ultimately reduce the per capita costs of wastewater treatment and disposal. Regionalization will also increase the technical and economical feasibility of a higher level of wastewater treatment, allowing the treated water to be a "resource" and not merely a "waste."
16. Regionalization of wastewater systems can consist of a broad range of alternatives from agreements for mutual aid between nearby wastewater authorities, to centralized operation and administration of separate wastewater systems, to combining smaller wastewater systems into a single larger system.
17. Focused, long-range planning is necessary to identify and implement regionalization, reclamation, recycling and/or conservation opportunities. This is a continuing process in that certain projects may not be technically or fiscally feasible at this time, but may become feasible as the community grows, treatment systems are upgraded, or other factors change with time.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Consistent with the policies described above, any new or existing discharger that owns or operates a wastewater treatment plant shall provide upon request in their Reports of Waste Discharge (ROWD), a report regarding:
  - a) Efforts that have been taken to promote new or expanded wastewater recycling and reclamation opportunities and programs;
  - b) Water conservation measures; and
  - c) Regional wastewater management opportunities and solutions (e.g. regionalization).

The reports should include all current efforts and actions involving regionalization, reclamation, recycling and conservation. The status of current

opportunities and activities, the potential for new opportunities and activities, and impediments to new or expanded efforts should be addressed.

2. As required by the Basin Plans, all dischargers requesting a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for discharges to surface waters, the ROWD must also include an evaluation of wastewater reclamation and land disposal as alternative disposal methods.
3. Regional Water Board staff will facilitate dischargers' opportunities for wastewater regionalization, recycling, reclamation, and conservation. Regional Water Board staff facilitation may include, but is not limited to, attending local government and stakeholder meetings, participating in public outreach efforts, and supporting the use of grant funding. Staff facilitation should promote initiation, optimization, and/or promotion of all types of water efficiency programs.
4. In evaluating the feasibility of regionalization, reclamation, recycling and conservation projects, the interrelationship of regionalization, reclamation, recycling, and conservation should be considered.
5. The Regional Water Board will consider innovative permitting options when existing NPDES permit requirements, waste discharge requirements, and/or enforcement Orders inhibit a discharger's ability to implement regionalization, recycling, reclamation, or conservation programs. All newly proposed permitting options must comply with the Clean Water Act and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act; and be protective of water quality.
6. In a future basin planning action, Regional Water Board staff is directed to develop and propose amendments to the Basin Plans that consider requirements regarding regionalization, recycling, reclamation, and conservation.

I, PAMELA C. CREEDON, Executive Officer, do hereby certify the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, on 23 April 2009.

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PAMELA C. CREEDON, Executive Officer