



Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

29 January 2025

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APPROVAL OF COMPLETION REQUEST FOR ZINC MANAGEMENT PLANS IN THE PANOCHES-SILVER CREEK WATERSHED – WESTLANDS WATER QUALITY COALITION

Thank you for your 30 December 2024 Surface Water Quality Management Plan (SQMP) Completion Request for zinc in the Panoche-Silver Creek watershed within the Westlands Water Quality Coalition area. Based on staff's review, I am approving the completion of the management plans.

Please continue monitoring for zinc in accordance with the Coalition's approved Surface Water Quality Monitoring Plan, the Monitoring and Reporting Program for Waste Discharge Requirements General Order R5-2014-0001-08, and the Pesticide Evaluation Protocol. Should future sample results for the above constituents document the exceedance of an applicable water quality objective or trigger more than once in a three-year period, the requirement to develop a SQMP shall apply.

The enclosed memorandum provides additional details regarding staff's review of the SQMP Completion Request. If you have any further questions regarding this letter, please contact Mathew Jian at (559) 445-5567 or by email at Mathew.Jian@waterboards.ca.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christen Shree".

For Patrick Pulupa
Executive Officer

Enclosure: Staff Review of the Westlands Water Quality Coalition Zinc Surface Water Quality Management Plan Completion Request

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

TO: Eric Warren, PE
Senior Water Resource Control Engineer
IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM

FROM: Mathew Jian
Water Resource Control Engineer
IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM

DATE: 29 January 2025

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMPLETION REQUEST FOR ZINC MANAGEMENT
PLANS IN THE PANOCHES-SILVER CREEK WATERSHED –
WESTLANDS WATER QUALITY COALITION**

On 30 December 2024, the Westlands Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) submitted a Surface Water Quality Management (SQMP) Completion Request to the Central Valley Water Board. Development of SQMPs is required under Waste Discharge Requirements General Order R5-2014-0001-08 (Order) for constituents that exceed water quality objectives or trigger limits at the same monitoring site more than once in a three-year period. The request addresses the existing SQMP for zinc within the Panoche-Silver Creek watershed which was initiated in 2016.

The Executive Officer can determine that management plans are complete once the following Order requirements are met:

- 1) At least three years of compliance with receiving water limitations during the times of year¹ when previous exceedances occurred, including consideration of peak use periods when the parameter is likely to be present
- 2) Documentation of third-party education and outreach to applicable Members in the watershed where water quality impairment occurred
- 3) Documentation of management practice implementation by applicable Members that address the exceedances, and
- 4) Demonstration of management practice effectiveness at addressing the water quality problem

Staff have evaluated available information for the zinc management plans at the two monitoring sites within the Panoche-Silver Creek watershed to assess whether the

¹ For this review, staff has evaluated water quality data collected the month prior to or after the month(s) the original exceedances occurred.

requirements for management plan completion have been met. A summary of the request and staff recommendations are provided in the following sections.

ZINC SURFACE WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPLETION REQUEST SUMMARY

Exceedances

Exceedances for zinc at the Panoche-Silver Creek at I-5 Crossing monitoring site and at the Panoche-Silver Creek at Belmont Avenue monitoring site occurred in July 2015, March 2016, and May 2016. The Coalition submitted a comprehensive SQMP in 2016 and the zinc management plans were initiated in 2016. Monthly monitoring for zinc occurred in the 2016 and 2017 water years. Starting in the 2019 water year and continuing through April 2024, monitoring for zinc was scheduled during months that were determined by the Pesticide Evaluation Protocol issued by the Executive Officer. Tables 2 and 3, and Attachment A in the management plan completion request documents the monitoring history from 2008 through August 2024.

Education and Outreach

The Coalition conducts general outreach activities to all Coalition members through annual meetings and newsletters. Focused outreach with 14 targeted members in the Panoche-Silver Creek watershed began in 2022, and the Coalition received Management Practice Implementation Report (MPIR) surveys from nine members. Two of the targeted members required follow-up contacts in 2023, and the Coalition received MPIR follow-up surveys from both members documenting new management practices to reduce runoff and erosion. Table 4 in the management plan completion request documents the focused outreach to applicable Members.

Management Practices Implementation

Table 5 and 6 of the management plan completion request documents the management practices implemented by nine of the 14 targeted members in 2022 and the two reporting members in 2023, respectively. Implemented management practices include regularly evaluating soil moisture to manage irrigation and installing grass row centers to prevent soil erosion.

Demonstration of Management Practice Effectiveness at Addressing the Water Quality Problem

The Coalition asserts that the lack of zinc exceedances since May 2016 demonstrates that focused outreach to educate growers and implement management practices has been effective in addressing the zinc surface water quality impairment.

STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Coalition was able to adequately address all 4 requirements to complete the management plan for zinc at the Panoche-Silver Creek watershed. Therefore, staff recommends the management completion request for zinc be approved. Regular

monitoring should continue in accordance with the Coalition's approved Surface Water Monitoring Plan, and the Pesticide Evaluation Protocol.