

State of California  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
June 14, 2006

- ITEM: 6
- SUBJECT: Waste Discharge Requirements: California Department of Transportation, Descanso Maintenance Station, San Diego County (tentative Order No. R9-2006-063). (*Victor Vasquez*)
- PURPOSE: To adopt waste discharge requirements for the subsurface discharge of up to 250 gallons per day of existing domestic wastewater and proposed pretreated vehicle washrack wastewater from the Descanso Maintenance Station by means of a conventional septic tank and leachfield system.
- PUBLIC NOTICE: The June 14, 2006 Regional Board meeting agenda notice that was mailed on May 19, 2006 served as the required official public notification for this action. Tentative drafts of the Order, including the draft monitoring and reporting program (M&RP), were mailed on May 10, 2006 to the discharger and all known interested parties and agencies for review and comment. Copies of the tentative Order and M&RP were made available for public review at the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board office on May 10, 2006. The tentative Order was also posted on the Regional Board's website on May 11, 2006.
- DISCUSSION: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) owns and operates the Descanso Maintenance Station (Facility) located at 24171 Japatul Valley Road just south of Interstate 8 near the town of Descanso in south San Diego County. The Facility is used year-round for truck washing, vehicle storage, and occasional vehicle repair. A crew of 8 employees are responsible for maintaining miles of highways on Interstate 8 and State Route 79 including fence/guardrail repair and sign repair. Approximately 160 gallons per day (GPD) of domestic wastewater from the Facility's restrooms and sinks are discharged to the septic tank/leachfield system located at least 100 ft downgradient from the Facility's potable water supply well.
- One to three road maintenance vehicles per week are washed at the Facility's vehicle washrack producing approximately 250

gallons per week of washrack wastewater. The washrack wastewater is treated via a sediment interceptor and oil/water separator and, until recently, a water treatment recycle system. The treated washrack wastewater was reused in vehicle cleaning. Because the water treatment recycle system had become unreliable and dissolved solids accumulated in the treated water, Caltrans Division of Engineering Services sought to eliminate reuse of the washrack wastewater and proposed instead to discharge the washrack wastewater after the oil/water separator to the Facility's septic tank and leachfield together with the existing domestic wastewater discharge. The total discharge to the septic tank/leach field system would be 210 GPD (160 GPD domestic wastewater and 50 GPD washrack wastewater based on 250 gallons per week discharged over five work days). In August 2005, Caltrans Division of Engineering Services contacted USEPA, the Regional Board and the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health (SDDEH) to obtain the required permits and meet other regulatory requirements for the proposed discharge of washrack wastewater.

The USEPA's Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program prohibits the discharge of automotive wastes to shallow injection wells such as leachfields. After submittal of UIC inventory information by Caltrans, USEPA Region IX determined that the disposal of washrack wastewater can be classified as an industrial drainage well and not prohibited under UIC regulations, provided that the Facility complies with the Regional Board's regulations and monitoring of the washrack wastes is conducted. It is necessary to ensure that inorganic and organic chemicals associated with vehicles are not being discharged in the washrack wastewater to the leachfield in order to protect beneficial uses of the groundwater in the Barret Lake HA (911.30).

In accordance with the Basin Plan, the Regional Board implements a general waiver program for discharges of domestic wastewater from conventional septic tank/leachfield systems which defers regulation of such discharges to the appropriate county health officer. The discharge from the Facility does not qualify for the general waiver program, and therefore requires either waste discharge requirements (WDRs) or an individual waiver, because the discharger is an agency of the State of California and the discharge from the Facility will include non-domestic wastewater. When initially contacted by

Caltrans, the SDDEH referred Caltrans to the Regional Board for the necessary regulatory requirements.

If adopted, the tentative Order No. R9-2006-0063 would establish WDRs for the subsurface discharge of the combined domestic wastewater and pretreated vehicle washrack wastewater from the Facility. The WDRs include discharge specifications and a monitoring and reporting program for the effluent discharged to the leachfield, for the vehicle washrack wastewater prior to discharge to the septic tank, and for groundwater in the vicinity of the leachfield. The WDRs contained in the tentative Order are based principally on the Basin Plan for the discharge of treated wastewater to land.

To date, comments on the tentative Order have been received from Caltrans Division of Engineering Services and Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis (see Supporting Documents 4 and 5, respectively). Staff will provide copies of any additional written comments received along with responses to comments and errata, if needed, to the Regional Board prior to the June 14, 2006 meeting.

**SIGNIFICANT CHANGES:** Tentative Order No. R9-2006-0063 is an issuance of WDRs for a discharge not previously regulated by the Regional Board.

**COMPLIANCE:** Tentative Order No. R9-2006-0063 is an issuance of WDRs for a discharge not previously regulated by the Regional Board.

**LEGAL CONCERNS:** None.

**SUPPORTING DOCS:**

1. Site Map.
2. Transmittal letter dated May 10, 2006.
3. Tentative Order No. R9-2006-0063 including a Monitoring and Reporting Program.
4. Comment letter from Caltrans Division of Engineering Services.
5. Comment letter from Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The adoption of tentative Order No. R9-2006-0063 is recommended.