

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Diego Region**

**Response To Comments**

**Tentative Order No. R9-2013-0006  
NPDES No. CA0109045**

**Waste Discharge Requirements  
for the City of San Diego South Bay Water Reclamation Plant  
Discharge to the Pacific Ocean via the South Bay Ocean Outfall**

By letter dated January 10, 2013, Mr. Roger Bailey, Director of Public Utilities, City of San Diego, provided comments on Tentative Order No. R9-2013-0006. A full and complete copy of the letter and enclosures is included as Supporting Document No. 3 for Item No. 8 on the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region (San Diego Water Board) February 13, 2013 Board Meeting Agenda.

The San Diego Water Board has prepared this Response to Comments document responding to the City of San Diego's comment letter. The comments are grouped by the Tentative Order section or attachment the comment is referring to, together with the San Diego Water Board's response to the comment.

**Comment No. 1:**

Section VI.C.7 (page 28) and  
Attachment F, Fact Sheet, Section V (pages F-28 through F-29) and Section VII.B.7  
(page F-34)

The City of San Diego (City) requested that the compliance schedule included in the Tentative Order to ensure that the discharge from the South Bay Water Reclamation Plant (SBWRP) does not cause or contribute to an excursion above the Receiving Water Limitations for Bacterial Characteristics be removed. The City contends that the discharge from SBWRP does not cause or contribute to violations of Receiving Water Limitations for Bacterial Characteristics contained in the Tentative Order and therefore the compliance schedule is unnecessary.

**Response to 1:** The Tentative Order has been modified as requested. The City jointly owns and operates the South Bay Ocean Outfall (SBOO) with the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), an agency of the U. S. Federal Government. The SBOO was constructed to receive treated wastewater discharges from the City's SBWRP and the IBWC's South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP).

The City provided a tabulation and interpretation of the receiving water monitoring data for the past 17 years. Based on the City's analysis, the bacterial water quality

objective exceedances in the receiving waters appear to be linked to the historically primary treated wastewater discharged from the IBWC's SBIWTP rather than from the secondary treated wastewater discharged from the City's SBWRP. From 1999 to 2010, the IBWC discharged primary treated wastewater from SBIWTP to the Pacific Ocean via the SBOO. During this same time period, sample results at the three offshore receiving water stations closest to the SBOO ranged from 72 to 94 percent in compliance with bacterial water quality objectives and sample results at all the offshore receiving water stations for SBOO ranged from 90 to 95 percent in compliance with bacterial water quality objectives. After IBWC completed the upgrade of the SBIWTP to meet secondary treatment requirements in January 2011, sample results at the three offshore stations closest to the SBOO were 99 percent in compliance and sample results at all the offshore stations for SBOO were also 99 percent in compliance. The receiving water monitoring results show no change in the compliance with bacterial water quality objectives at the offshore stations for SBOO after the SBWRP began discharging in May, 2002. The San Diego Water Board has concluded that the secondary treated wastewater from SBWRP does not appear to cause or contribute to violations of bacterial objectives in the receiving water. This conclusion is based on 1) the correlation between the historic non-compliance record of bacterial water quality objective exceedances in the receiving waters and the formerly primary treated discharge from SBIWTP; 2) the absence of changes to the receiving water bacterial water quality objective compliance record after the start of the discharge from SBWRP; and 3) SBWRP's near 100 percent compliance record with NPDES permit secondary treatment requirements during the past two years. For all of these reasons the secondary treated wastewater discharge from SBWRP does not appear to cause or contribute to violations of bacterial water quality objectives in the receiving water. The errata removes the compliance schedule from the Tentative Order. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata Nos. 1, 2, and 3.)

**Comment No. 2**

Section V.A.1.a (pages 15-16) and  
Attachment F, Fact Sheet, Section V

The City requested that the San Diego Water Board reconsider the application of Water Contact Recreation (REC-1) beneficial use designation further than 1000 feet from the shoreline or the 30-foot contour.

**Response to 2:** No change to the Tentative Order is warranted. Effective February 14, 2006, the revised California Ocean Plan (Ocean Plan) specifies that the water contact bacterial standards apply to areas used for water contact recreation as determined by the San Diego Water Board (i.e., ocean waters with the REC-1 beneficial use designation). Because the San Diego Water Board has not completed a process to designate specific areas where the Ocean Plan water contact bacterial standards apply, the bacterial Standards apply throughout all jurisdictional ocean waters in the San Diego Region extending three nautical miles into the Pacific Ocean from the shoreline. The requirement to meet receiving water

bacterial objectives in this expanded zone is consistent with similar requirements in other San Diego Water Board ocean outfall NPDES Permits. This interpretation has been confirmed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

**Comment No. 3**

Section VI.C.2.c (page 21) and  
Attachment F, Fact Sheet, Section VII.B.2.c

Toxicity Reduction Requirements: The Tentative Order states on page 21 that: "If the performance goal for chronic toxicity is exceeded in any one test at Monitoring Location E-002, then within 15 days of the exceedance, the Discharger shall begin conducting six additional tests, bi-weekly, over a 12 week period."

In order to further clarify when the additional testing should begin, the City requests that the above underlined language (within 15 days of the exceedance) be replaced with "...within 15 days of receipt of these test results." This change would be consistent with similar requirements specified in Order No. R9-2009-0001 for the City's Pt. Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant.

**Response to 3:** The Tentative Order has been modified as requested. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata Nos. 4 and 5)

**Comment No. 4**

Attachment E, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP), Section II.A (page E-4)  
Table E-1 – Monitoring Station Locations: The depth of 90 ft. (27 m) listed for offshore station I-8 is incorrect. The correct depth should be "118 ft. (36 m)." This error was also present in previous Order R9-2006-0067, while the original orders for both the SBWRP (No. 2000-129) and IWTP (No. 96-50) had the correct depth of 118 ft. listed.

**Response to 4:** The Tentative Order has been corrected. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 6)

**Comment No. 5**

Attachment E, MRP, Section II.A (page E-5)  
Table E-1 – Monitoring Station Locations: The latitude listed for Rig Fishing station RF-3 is incorrect. The correct latitude as listed in previous Order No. R9-2006-0067 should be "32° 32.270'N (not 32.370'N).

**Response to 5:** The Tentative Order has been corrected. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 7)

**Comment No. 6**

Attachment E, MRP, Section IV.A.1 (page E-6)

Table E-3 – Phenolic Compounds: Confirm that Phenolic compounds (both non-chlorinated and chlorinated), Endosulfan, Endrin, and Hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH) should be collected as grabs rather than 24-hour composites. Previous Order R9- 2006-0067 listed sampling type as 24-hour composite. Changing to grabs would result in a material change in the continuity and comparability of the monitoring data.

**Response to 6:** The Tentative Order has been corrected. The errata changes the sampling type to 24-hour composites for the above chemical constituents. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 8.)

#### **Comment No. 7**

Attachment E, MRP, Section VI, Table E-16 (page E-12)

Taxon Name/Spelling Correction, Table E-6: The correct spelling for the mysid in row 5 is *Holmesimysis costata* (not *Homesimysis* – i.e., it's missing an "L" as the 3rd letter).

**Response to 7:** The Tentative Order has been corrected. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 9.)

#### **Comment No. 8**

Attachment E, MRP, Section IX.C., Infauna, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph (page E-17)

Benthic Monitoring – Infauna: This section says organisms "...shall be fixed in 15 percent buffered formalin." This should be corrected to 10% formalin, which is consistent with methods specified for the Pt. Loma Ocean Outfall monitoring program and for the most recent Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program (Bight '08: see Coastal Ecology Field Operations Manual, p. 28).

**Response to 8:** The Tentative Order has been modified as requested. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 10.)

#### **Comment No. 9**

Attachment E, MRP, Section XI.B., (pages E-20-21)

Self Monitoring Reports (SMRs):

1. Does the submission of CIWQS data and upload with cover letter, constitute the required submittal of the SMR?
2. Please clarify spill reporting requirements. SSOs have requirements defined elsewhere in the Order and this appears to conflict with those. If reporting of spills other than SSOs is the intent, please identify types.

#### **Response to 9:**

1. Yes, the submission of CIWQS data and upload with cover letter constitute the required submittal of the SMR.
2. Section VI.C.2.b.iv. (page 21) requires the City to include a detailed summary of spills in the monthly self-monitoring report for the month in which the spill occurred. If no spills occurred during the calendar month, the Discharger shall

report no spills in the monthly self-monitoring report for that calendar month. Attachment E, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP), Section XI.B., Table E-10 reiterates the same requirement as a reminder to include this information in the monthly report submittals. Section VI.C.2.a.i. defines the term “spill” for that section of the Tentative Order as not including sanitary sewer overflows from the sewage collection system that are reportable under separate waste discharge requirements.

**Comment No. 10**

Attachment E, MRP, Section XI.B.2, Table E-10 (page E-21) and Attachment E, MRP, Section XI.D, (page E-24)

Table E-10. Monitoring Periods and Reporting Schedule:

1. The City strongly suggests replacing Table E-10 (Monitoring Periods and Reporting Schedule) to make the schedule specific and the due dates clear. We suggest using the “Revised Table E-10” included below, which follows the model in Table E-9 of the Pt. Loma NPDES Permit (Order No. R9-2009-0001).
2. We also strongly recommend eliminating the table in section D.7 on page E-24, which appears to be largely duplicative.

**Response to 10:**

1. The Tentative Order has been modified to clarify what and when the reports are due. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 11.)
2. The table in Section D.7 on page E-24 (labeled as Table E-11 in the errata) is not duplicative of Table E-10. Table E-10 includes monitoring required within Attachment E, Sections III through X, while Table E-11 includes reports required in Table 3 (page 1 of the Tentative Order) and Sections VI.C (pages 19-28 of the Tentative Order). The errata sheet removes the annual benthic and biological monitoring report from Table E-11 and places it in Table E-10. (Please see Errata Sheet/ Supporting Document No. 6, Errata No. 12.)

**Comment No. 11**

Attachment E, MRP, Section IX (pages E-13 through E-19)

Receiving Water Monitoring Requirements:

The City requested modifications to the receiving water monitoring program in the Report of Waste Discharge application for the NPDES permit reissuance and in comments on the Tentative Order.

**Response to 11:** No change to the Tentative Order receiving water monitoring program is recommended at the present time. The City jointly owns and operates the SBOO with IBWC. The SBOO receives treated wastewater discharges from the City’s SBWRP and the IBWC’s SBIWTP. Each of these facility discharges to the SBOO is regulated under separate NPDES permits which have the same receiving water monitoring program. The San Diego Water Board will be conducting a comprehensive review of the SBOO receiving water monitoring program as part of the NPDES permit reissuance for IBWC’s SBIWTP, which is projected to occur

sometime in the late 2013 mid 2014 time frame. The Tentative Order receiving water monitoring program for SBOO will also be reviewed at the same time. Based on the review, the receiving water monitoring program for SBOO will, if appropriate, be modified at the same time to ensure that the receiving water monitoring program in the SBIWTP and SBWRP NPDES permits remain consistent for the shared SBOO.