

COMMUNITY SERVICES & WATER DEPARTMENT

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Waste Discharge Requirements Unit
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 15th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via Mail and E-mail

SUBJECT: Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Reduction Program – Review and Update

Dear Board Members:

The City of Vernon has received notice that comments can be submitted regarding the review and update of the Program. The Program has only recently been implemented and the City of Vernon believes that the State Board should consider the following:

- 1) Implementation of the SSO WDR (SWRCB Order 2006-003) should be given additional time before major changes are made. The full SSO General Order program has only been in existence for all agencies for two years, and some agencies are not even required to have their Sewer System Management Plans (SSMPs) completed until August 2010. During the last 2-3 years, collection agencies have been developing their sewer system management plans (SSMPs), increasing budgets for their collection system activities (a process that usually takes a year or more) and going through various types of training in order to make improvements in their operational capabilities and comply with the SSO General Order. The SWRCB and Regional Boards, along with the enrollees, are still at the beginning of the implementation period for this new program. Not only does the SWRCB need to allow more time for enrollees to develop and implement their SSMPs but it should not make major changes in the SSO WDR's requirements since it will create confusion and make it even more challenging for collection system agencies to improve their infrastructure by changing the requirements mid-stream.
- 2) The SWRCB should be focusing its resources on obtaining compliance with the existing program, including ensuring that all entities that should be enrolled are enrolled and that reporting is occurring as required. Furthermore, education on requirements and technical assistance, particularly for smaller agencies, are the most important tools at this stage to achieve the goals of the program, i.e. reduction of sanitary sewer overflows.
- 3) When the SWRCB sets enforcement priorities, it should focus enforcement actions on those SSOs that pose significant water quality or public health concerns. Not all spills

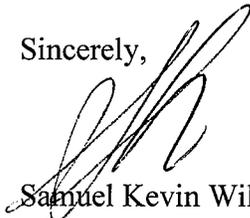
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are equal. The reporting data show that the vast majority (85-90%) of spills are small (<1,000 gallons) and these generally do not cause a public health or water quality impact and therefore should be much lower priority for enforcement action. Enforcement resources focused on SSOs should also be made in the context of all other water quality enforcement priorities, so that the highest level of effort is focused on those violations with the greatest environmental impacts.

- 4) Small spills, such as those that are less than 100 gallons, which represent nearly 90% of the total number of spills reported but are less than 4% of the total reported volume of all spill events, do not create impacts of significance, yet scarce public resources must be spent on reporting these spills that could be used for better purposes (i.e., implementation of maintenance programs).
- 5) The SWRCB should stay the course and focus efforts on current SSO WDR requirements until the program is fully implemented and not reopen the permit at this time. In addition, the SWRCB should continue efforts to: 1) evaluate and analyze spill reporting data so that appropriate refinement of reporting requirements can be made in the future and 2) ensure that all affected parties are enrolled in program and are in compliance with program requirements (i.e., reporting and SSMP development and implementation).

If you require additional information, please contact Sherwood Natsuhara of my staff at (323) 583-8811, Ext. 305.

Sincerely,



Samuel Kevin Wilson, P.E.
Director of Community Services & Water

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