

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 20-21, 2008
Prepared on February 21, 2008

ITEM NUMBER: 27

SUBJECT: Rescission of Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 95-08 for Blossom Hill Winery, Paicines, San Benito County; regulation by the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Winery Waste, Order No. R3-2008-0018 (General Winery WDR)

KEY INFORMATION

Discharger: Blossom Hill Winery
Location: 385 Panoche Road, Pacines, San Benito County
Discharge Type: Winery Wastewater
Existing Order: Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 95-08 for Blossom Hill Winery
This Action: Rescind Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 95-08

SUMMARY

On April 14, 1995, the Central Coast Water Board adopted Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 95-08 to regulate winery wastewater discharging from the Blossom Hill Winery's (Discharger) production operations. Central Coast Water Board staff sent a letter to the Discharger on August 8, 2007, requesting submittal of a Report of Waste Discharge (ROWD) for coverage under the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Winery Waste, Order No. R3-2008-0018 (General Winery WDR, formerly Order No. R3-2002-0084). The Discharger submitted a complete ROWD application on October 2, 2007. Central Coast Water Board staff recommends rescinding Order No. 95-08 because the General Winery WDR appropriately regulates the same activities.

The Executive Officer enrolled the Blossom Hill Winery in the General Winery WDR on February 26, 2008.

DISCUSSION

The Discharger is located in the town of Paicines, south of the City of Hollister, San Benito County. The Discharger produces approximately 5,000,000 cases of wine per year with an average winery wastewater peak flow of 60,000 gallons per day during the crush season. Winery wastewater discharges to an 11-acre spreading basin (approximately 3.5 million gallon capacity) which percolates the wastewater down through the vadose zone. The depth to groundwater is greater than 25 feet below ground surface and the disposal area is 460 feet from the nearest water supply well. The Discharger composts its grape pomace at the site. Water Board staff currently regulates the Discharger by Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 95-08, which sets requirements for the management and operations of its winery wastewater treatment and discharge systems.

As part of Order No. 95-08, the Discharger is required to comply with prohibitions, discharge specifications, groundwater limitations, standard provisions, as well as monitoring and reporting requirements.

GENERAL WINERY WDR

The Central Coast Water Board adopted the General Winery WDR on February 7, 2008. The purpose for the General WDR is to regulate commercial winemaking operations that discharge winery wastewater from production activities to a location other than a community sewer system. Facilities subject to the General Winery WDR include all commercial winemaking facilities. A "large" winery operation is defined as one crushing greater than or equal to 1,500 tons of grapes per year, or producing greater than or equal to 100,000 cases, or 240,000 gallons of pressed wine per year. The Central Coast Water Board categorizes the Discharger as a "large" winery operation because it produces 5,000,000 cases of wine per year.

The General Winery WDR requires compliance with discharge prohibitions, specifications, effluent limitations, groundwater limitations, standard provisions, as well as monitoring and reporting requirements. In addition, the General Winery WDR recommends design criteria suitable for treatment and disposal of winery wastewater.

The monitoring and reporting program of the General Winery WDR requires the Discharger to monitor water supply, winery production, chemical usage (if used), septic system usage (if used), disposal area, and groundwater (if deemed necessary). However, the Executive Officer can modify the monitoring and reporting program to suit the facility's wastewater discharge characteristics.

Finding No. 15 of the General Winery WDR discusses the transfer of winery operations that are covered under an individual WDR to General Winery WDR enrollment. Finding No. 15 states the following:

"For wineries currently covered by individual WDRs, the Water Board will consider whether to regulate each winery under these General WDRs at or before the time the individual WDRs are scheduled for review or renewal. The date of review is specified within the individual WDRs. If Water Board staff determines that regulation under these General WDRs is preferable to individual WDRs, staff will require the Discharger to submit a NOI."

Upon review of the Discharger's existing individual WDR, staff finds that enrollment under the General Winery WDR is appropriate and would regulate the same types of winery wastewater operations and disposal activities.

COMPLIANCE HISTORY

In August 2007, the Central Coast Regional Board staff sent the Discharger a notice of violation (NOV) for aluminum and selenium effluent concentrations exceeding limits set in WDR Order No. 95-08. Additionally, the Discharger submitted their 2007 annual report 85 days late. The Discharger responded immediately to the NOV and provided historic aluminum and selenium effluent and groundwater data. The Discharger indicates the elevated aluminum and selenium may be due to irregular sampling protocols and will improve the quality of the sampling procedures plus install more groundwater monitoring wells for better assessment of groundwater characteristics. The 2007 annual report was reportedly late due to pending groundwater analytical

results in response to the August NOV. The Discharger has otherwise complied with Order No. 95-08.

Central Coast Water Board staff conducted an inspection on May 3, 2006. Staff inspected the winery processes, wastewater facilities, and disposal locations. Water Board staff did not find any violations during the inspection.

RECOMMENDATION

Rescind Order No. 95-08.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Existing Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 95-08
2. Blossom Hill Winery letter of tentative enrollment under General Winery WDR (proposed by staff at the March 21, 2008 meeting)
3. General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Winery Waste Order No. R3-2008-0018 (General Winery WDR) with the modified monitoring and reporting program.

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