



Enforcement News

Foul odors from Tulare County pistachio processing plant trigger cease and desist order

Processor violated waste discharge requirements

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Contact: Dale Harvey
dale.harvey@waterboards.ca.gov

SACRAMENTO –The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted a cease and desist order yesterday directing [Setton Pistachio](#) of Terra Bella, Inc., to immediately eliminate objectionable odors coming from a large pond that contains pistachio processing wastewater.

Issued at the start of pistachio season, the order also requires the pistachio producer to submit a pond compliance plan by Aug. 21, a plan that would be immediately implemented upon any future detection of odors that violate specifications. Violation of the [order](#) can lead to civil penalties and loss of the privilege to discharge wastewater to the pond. The foul odors have disturbed nearby residents of Terra Bella, an unincorporated community in Tulare County, for nearly two years.

Staff from the board's Enforcement Unit in Fresno worked with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District in response to numerous odor complaints and documented violations of Waste Discharge Requirements during inspections in 2019 and early 2020.

An investigation confirmed the odors originated in the pond and were detectable well beyond Setton's property.

Between June 2019 and April 2020, board staff received 17 complaints from residents and issued three Notices of Violation to Setton.

The air pollution control district also investigated more than 100 complaints and regularly provided the information and inspection findings to board staff.

The [Central Valley Water Board](#) is a state agency responsible for protecting water quality and ensuring beneficial uses such as aquatic habitat and human health for 11,350 miles of streams, 579,110 acres of lakes, and the largest contiguous groundwater basin in California. It also is the largest of nine regional boards, encompassing 60,000 square miles, or about 40 percent of the state. Thirty-eight of 58 counties are either completely or partially within the board's boundaries, formed by the crests of the Sierra Nevada on the east, the Coast Ranges and Klamath Mountains on the west, the Oregon border on the north, and the Tehachapi Mountains on the south.

