

State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
December 11, 2014

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: NPDES Permit Amendment: An order to amend Order No. R9-2010-0012, NPDES Permit No. CA0108952, *Waste Discharge Requirements for the Sweetwater Authority Richard A. Reynolds Desalination Facility Discharge to the Lower Sweetwater River Basin, San Diego County* (Tentative Order No. R9-2014-0109). (*Ben Neill*)

PURPOSE: To consider adopting Tentative Order No. R9-2014-0109, amending Order No. R9-2010-0012. **(See Supporting Document No. 1)**

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of Tentative Order No. R9-2014-0109 is recommended.

KEY ISSUES: The Tentative Order proposes to modify Order No. R9-2010-0012 to:

1. Change the location of the brine waste discharge in the Sweetwater River;
2. Adjust the salinity effluent limitation based on the changed location of the discharge; and
3. Revise the monitoring and reporting requirements based on the changed location of the discharge.

PRACTICAL VISION: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, such as Order No. R9-2010-0012, are the chief regulatory approach for controlling point source pollutant discharges to surface waters for the protection of human health and the environment. Consistent with the mission of the *Strategy for Healthy Waters* chapter of the Practical Vision, modification of Order No. R9-2010-0012 is proposed to ensure that the Order reflects changed conditions and integrates all applicable technology-based and water quality-based standards to optimize protection of water quality and beneficial uses in inland surface waters.

Also, modification of the Order to relocate the discharge outfall will enable the Sweetwater Authority to expand the demineralization facility to further augment local water supplies, consistent with the mission statement of the *Strategy for Achieving a Sustainable Local Water Supply* chapter of the Practical Vision: “To use the San Diego Water Board’s leadership and regulatory authority to encourage, promote, and facilitate development of new and diverse sustainable local water supplies in an environmentally responsible manner.”

DISCUSSION: On May 12, 2010, the San Diego Water Board adopted Order No. R9-2010-0012, establishing waste discharge requirements for the Sweetwater Authority to discharge up to 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD) of demineralization brine and miscellaneous groundwater discharges from the Richard A. Reynolds Desalination Facility to the Sweetwater River. The Facility uses reverse osmosis and chlorination to treat “brackish” or saline groundwater to make it safe for augmenting local drinking water supplies. Order No. R9-2010-0012 provides that following relocation of the brine discharge to a location closer to San Diego Bay, the Sweetwater Authority may increase the brine discharge flow rate from 1.0 MGD to 2.5 MGD. **(See Supporting Document No. 2)**

By letter dated April 1, 2014, the Sweetwater Authority notified the San Diego Water Board that the relocation of the discharge outfall is complete and that discharge has commenced at the new outfall location. On March 16, 2012, and on July 31, 2014, the Sweetwater Authority also submitted requests to make several additional permit modifications. If adopted, the Tentative Order will modify Order No. R9- 2010-0012 to :

- Reflect the completion of the new Outfall construction;
- Revise the discharge coordinates to reflect the new outfall location;
- Require that brine discharges from the old outfall are terminated except for emergencies or when maintenance is conducted at the new outfall;
- Revise the effluent limitations for salinity based on new information provided by the Sweetwater Authority ; and
- Amend the monitoring and reporting requirements based on the change in discharge location.

The only comment letter received regarding the Tentative Order was from the Sweetwater Authority requesting a few minor corrections. **(See Supporting Document No. 3)** A Response To Comment document has been included as **Supporting Document No. 4**.

The comment letter, Response to Comment document, and Revised Tentative Order were mailed out on November 25, 2014 to all interested parties and posted on the San Diego Water Board website.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. Revised Tentative Order No. R9-2014-0109
2. Location Map
3. Comment Letter from Sweetwater Authority
4. Response to Comments

PUBLIC NOTICE:

On October 6, 2014, the Tentative Order was sent to the Sweetwater Authority and all known interested parties. The Tentative Order was also posted on the San Diego Water Board website. Notice was also provided in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the December 11, 2014 Board meeting.