

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LOS ANGELES REGION

City of Los Angeles, California
June 9, 2016
597th Regular Meeting

ITEM: 12

SUBJECT: City of Santa Clarita (City or Discharger) – Vista Canyon Water Factory (Water Factory)

PURPOSE: Issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Recycling Requirements (WDRs/WRRs) for the City.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:

The City submitted a Report of Waste Discharge (ROWD) to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region (Regional Board) on March 20, 2014 for WDRs and WRRs authorizing the City to discharge tertiary-treated wastewater from the Water Factory for non-potable recycled water applications that comply with California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 22, division 4, chapter 3 (hereafter "Title 22").

BACKGROUND:

The Vista Canyon Project consists of an approximately 185-acre development in the Vista Canyon area, providing 1,100 residential units with a residential population estimated at 3,500, and up to 950,000 square feet of commercial and medical offices, retail stores, theater, restaurants, and hotel. The Project includes the construction of the Water Factory - a tertiary wastewater treatment and reclamation plant for wastewater generated from the Vista Canyon Project. The Water Factory, owned by the City, is located in the Santa Clarita Valley in unincorporated Los Angeles County, directly adjacent to the City. The design capacity of the Water Factory is 392,000 gallons per day (GPD). The wastewater treatment process consists of preliminary treatment, flow equalization, secondary treatment, clarification, tertiary treatment, and disinfection (UV and chlorination with sodium hypochlorite). This treated effluent will be recycled for on-site landscape irrigation and other non-potable applications. The sludge (21,000 GPD) and any excess treated effluent not being recycled from the Water Factory and any untreated wastewater generated from the Vista Canyon Project will be discharged to the downstream facilities of the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District, including the Saugus Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) and/or the Valencia WRP.

The revised tentative WDRs/WRRs implement applicable requirements including water quality objectives for groundwater specified in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and

Ventura Counties (Basin Plan), Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), the State Recycled Water Policy, and the State Antidegradation Policy.

COMMENTS RECEIVED:

Written comments on this item were due on May 23, 2016. The Regional Board timely received seven (7) comment letters from:

1. Mr. Steve Knight, Member of United States House of Representatives,
2. Mr. Scott Wilk, Assembly Member of California Legislature,
3. Santa Clarita Water District and Castaic Lake Water Agency,
4. Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce,
5. Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corporation,
6. City of Santa Clarita and Vista Canyon Ranch, LLC, and
7. Sierra Club

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS:

Comments received from the public and staff's response are included in the Board Package (Section 12.6). Staff have reviewed and responded to the significant issues raised by the commenters, and has proposed certain revisions to the WDRs/WRRs, as follows (comment in **bold**):

1. **The distribution of treated wastewater for recycled water will be managed by the Castaic Lake Water Agencies which may not fairly distribute water in the Eastern end of the basin.**

Response: The concern regarding the distribution plan should be discussed with the Discharger. The Regional Board does not have the legal authority to designate which agency the City of Santa Clarita retains for the recycled water distribution.

2. **The Saugus treatment plants may not have capacity to accept sludge and untreated wastewater from the Vista Canyon project.**

Response: The Saugus and Valencia Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs) have design capacities of 6.1 and 21.1 million gallons per day (MGD), respectively. The monthly average effluents discharged from the Saugus WRP and the Valencia WRP are 5.1 MGD 13.9 MGD, respectively. The maximum discharge from the Water Factory would be 0.39 MGD. Each WRP has sufficient capacity to accommodate the sludge and untreated wastewater discharged from the Santa Clarita Water Factory. Additionally, the Saugus and Valencia plants are independently responsible for maintaining compliance at their facility.

3. **Sewage releases, by accident or due to natural disasters, to Santa Clara River are not acceptable. Problems should be**

anticipated and contingencies developed before a foreseeable potential emergency occurs.

Response: Discharges of raw sewage and the treated wastewater to surface water are prohibited. The tentative WDRs/WRRs address the potential impacts of climate change (Finding No. 18) and will require the City of Santa Clarita to construct the retaining wall in conformance with the County of Los Angeles Capital-Flood requirement, which exceed a 1,000-year storm event. In addition, the City of Santa Clarita is required to submit a Climate Change Effects Vulnerability Assessment and Management Plan for the foreseeable emergencies specified in Section VII.2 of the tentative WDRs/WRRs permit.

4. The sanitation plant will be built dangerously close to the floodway of the Santa Clara River.

Response: The Regional Board's authority and responsibility is to regulate discharges of waste that could impact the waters of the State. The Regional Board is not a land use planning agency and its actions to address water quality do not constitute approval of any development. It is the responsibility of the land use planning agency, in this case, the City of Santa Clarita, to approve the development project. The Regional Board previously issued a Clean Water Act section 401 certification of a Clean Water Act section 404 permit issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers that addressed impacts of dredge and fill activities on waters of the state.

OPTIONS:

The Regional Board may:

1. Adopt the revised tentative Order, as proposed;
2. Adopt the revised tentative Order with modification; or
2. Not adopt the revised tentative Order.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the revised tentative Order be adopted, as proposed.