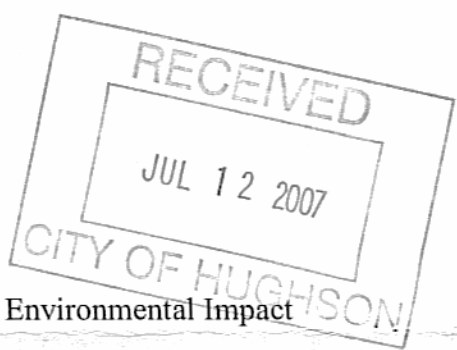


TURLOCK IRRIGATION DISTRICT
333 EAST CANAL DRIVE
POST OFFICE BOX 949
TURLOCK, CALIFORNIA 95381
(209) 883-8300

July 11, 2007

City of Hughson
Attn: David M. Chase, P.E.
7018 Pine Street
Hughson, CA 95326



RE: Draft Hughson Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Dear Mr. Chase:

The Turlock Irrigation District (District) acknowledges the opportunity to review and comment on the referenced project. The District's comments to the Draft EIR for the Hughson Wastewater Treatment Plant are itemized below.

General Comments

1. Has the City evaluated the effect of increased percolation on groundwater discharge to the Tuolumne River? What is the effect of percolation of treated wastewater on water quality in the Tuolumne River?
2. There is no discussion on a water supply from the proposed Regional Surface Water Supply Project. This source would reduce the salinity in treated water that should reduce the potential for salinity violations in the current WWTP.

Specific Comments

Pages ES-3 and 2-5
Future use of Pond #4 is not discussed.

Page 3-63 River Discharge
While this is an option, is it to be pursued under this plant expansion?

If discharge to the river is required as part of a revised WDR, how will impacts to the Tuolumne River be addressed?

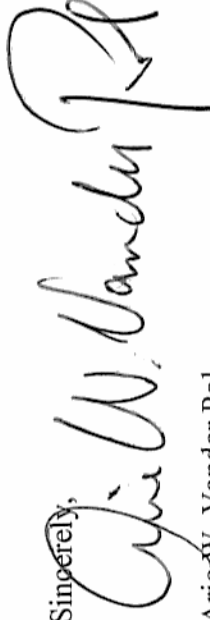
Page 3-69 Impact #3.9.4
This should note that construction activities are still subject to SWPPP regulations.

Page 3-69 Impact #3.9.5

How will existing percolation ponds 7, 8, 9 and 10 be retired? (i.e. returned to riparian forest or used for storm water). Also, if these ponds are not permitted for wastewater in a 100-year flood zone would they be available for storm water?

Questions concerning these comments, may be directed to me at the contact information noted below.

Sincerely,



Arie-W. Vander Pol
Engineering Technician, Civil
Telephone: (209) 883-8384
Fax: (209) 656-2180
e-mail: awvanderpol@tid.org

CF: 2005048



State Water Resources Control Board



Division of Financial Assistance

1001 I Street • Sacramento, California 95814 • (916) 341-5700 FAX (916) 341-5707

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 944212 • Sacramento, California • 94244-2120

Internet Address: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov>

Linda S. Adams

Secretary for

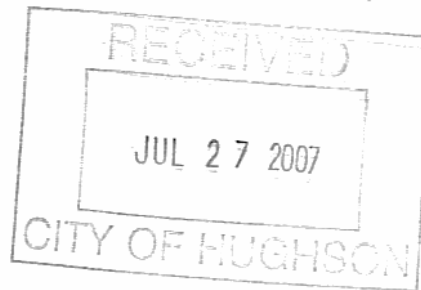
Environmental Protection

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Governor

JUL 25 2007

Mr. David M. Chase, P.E.
Director of Public Works
City of Hughson
7018 Pine Street
Hughson, CA 95326



Dear Mr. Chase,

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE CITY OF HUGHSON (CITY);
HUGHSON WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (PROJECT); STANISLAUS COUNTY;
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2006122032

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above document. We understand that the City is pursuing a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan for this Project. State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff have reviewed the draft EIR and have several specific comments. As a funding agency and a State agency with jurisdiction by law to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, the State Water Board is providing the following comments on the environmental document prepared for the Project.

Following the public review period and development of the final EIR, please send us a copy of: (1) a Resolution certifying the final EIR and making California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) findings, including a Statement of Overriding Considerations for Identified Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts, (2) all comments received during the review period and the City's responses to those comments, (3) the adopted Mitigation Monitoring Plan, and (4) the Notice of Determination filed with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research applicable to the Project. In addition, we would appreciate notices of any hearings or meetings held regarding environmental review of any SRF projects.

SRF loans are partially funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and require additional "CEQA-Plus" environmental documentation and review. The State Water Board is required to consult directly with agencies responsible for implementing federal environmental laws and regulations. Note that SRF loan projects are subject to provisions of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and must obtain Section 7 clearance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prior to a loan commitment. Please be advised that once your SRF application is received, the State Water Board will be requesting the USEPA's initiation of formal consultation with USFWS because the Project will have the potential to impact the federally threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*). We will let you know if there are additional reports needed.

In addition, SRF projects must comply with federal laws pertaining to cultural resources, specifically Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Please contact the State Water Board's Cultural Resources Officer, Ms. Cookie Hirn, at (916) 341-5690 to initiate the Section 106 process.

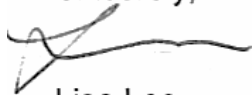
California Environmental Protection Agency

Following are my specific comments on the draft EIR:

1. Page 3-7 states that "approximately 30 acres of Prime Farmland will be converted to public facility use as treatment facilities and percolation ponds for the wastewater treatment plant. The loss of Prime Farmland is significant and unavoidable," and "the Project will conflict with Williamson Act Contract land and will cause a significant and unavoidable impact." Page 3-78 mentions that even though "noise is not expected to exceed the threshold for normally acceptable noise levels, there could be a potential, temporary and significant impact." According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15093(b), when the lead agency approves a project that will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its actions based on the final EIR. If the City decides to certify the EIR and approve the Project, please include a Statement of Overriding Considerations that addresses specific reasons why the City will approve the Project even though significant and unavoidable impacts will remain, and provide substantial evidence to support your reasons.
2. Page 3-38 provides mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to the Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB). Some of these mitigation measures state that "other protection measures and replacement of elderberry bushes, when applicable, are implemented as outlined in *Conservation Guidelines for the VELB* (USFWS 1999; Appendix D of this EIR)," and "for each bush in which the VELB is found, the 100-foot buffer area shall be observed during the activity period of the VELB (from April to July). Construction activities may occur within the 100-foot buffer area during other periods provided the mitigation measures outlined above are implemented and restoration within the buffer area is completed by beetle emergence (April)." Please define the term "observed," and identify the correct appendix that addresses other VELB protection measures.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to review the City's draft EIR. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (916) 327-9401 or by email at LDLEE@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Lisa Lee
Regional Programs Unit

cc: State Clearinghouse
(Re: SCH# 2006122032)
P. O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044



Linda S. Adams
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

Karl E. Longley, ScD, P.E., Chair



Arnold
Schwarzenegger
Governor

Sacramento Main Office

11020 Sun Center Drive #200, Rancho Cordova, California 95670-6114
Phone (916) 464-3291 • FAX (916) 464-4645
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley>

30 July 2007

Mr. David Chase, Director of Public Works
City of Hughson
7018 Pine St
Hughson, CA 95326

RESPONSE TO DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, HUGHSON WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, SCH# 2006122032, STANISLAUS COUNTY

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), which we received on 10 July 2007. The DEIR describes the proposed project to expand and redesign the City of Hughson wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). Proposed improvements include installing a new headworks, Parshall flume, odor control system, and RAS/WAS pump station. Treatment capability improvements include increasing flow capacity from 1.0 mgd to 1.9 mgd, installing two new oxidation ditches, and two new 70 feet diameter clarifiers. Land disposal improvements include abandoning the lower percolation ponds 7, 8, 9, and 10 and building three new ponds west of the existing facility.

Regional Water Board staff previously commented on the Notice of Preparation for the project in a letter dated 17 January 2007. Those comments provided information regarding various permit requirements that may be applicable to the project. Regional Water Board staff offers the following comments specific to wastewater treatment and disposal:

1. If the City of Hughson WWTP plans to continue utilizing percolation ponds 5 and 6 for water disposal, please provide full disclosure of the current seepage problems associated with their lower berms. Additionally, please describe the investigative and/or rehabilitation techniques that will be needed to fix the current conditions.

Issues with ponds 5 and 6 have previously been addressed in the current WDRs (Order No. 5-00-024). Specifically, Finding 12 states: "Ponds 5 and 6 are rarely used because they exhibit relatively fast percolation, which can express as seepage at the toe of the slope below the ponds. Seepage from these ponds, if any, does not discharge directly into surface water but causes localized saturation of on-site maintenance roads. Therefore, this Order requires that the Discharger cease use of these ponds until a registered Geotechnical Engineer verifies that the impoundment dike and slope below these ponds is stable."

Additionally, Provision 4 states: "The Discharger shall cease discharge to Ponds 5 and 6 until Discharger submits, and Board staff approves, a slope stability analysis report demonstrating that continued use of these ponds does not present an unacceptably high risk of pond levee failure and subsequent accidental release to the Tuolumne River. The slope stability analysis shall be completed by a registered Geotechnical Engineer, and shall present calculated factors of safety for all reasonably foreseeable conditions, including consideration of site specific soil properties, vadose zone moisture content and hydraulic conductivity, the effects of hydrostatic loads, the maximum credible earthquake, and potential rapid drawdown scenarios."

2. Page 3-57: The effluent quality limitations for salinity, coliform organisms, and nitrate set forth in the current WDRs will be re-examined during development of revised WDRs, and will be set to the value necessary to protect the underlying groundwater. The groundwater limitations will also be re-examined and possibly revised based on background groundwater quality, best practical treatment and control (BPTC) measures implemented, and the applicable water quality limits from the Basin Plan. However, please note that applicable groundwater quality limits may be more stringent than MCLs, as discussed below.
3. Page 3-58: With regard to the Basin Plan please note the following:
 - a. The beneficial uses of groundwater include municipal, agricultural, and industrial water supply. Accordingly, the Basin Plan sets narrative and numerical water quality objectives for each of these uses. Therefore, the applicable water quality limit for any given constituent may be lower than the MCLs cited in the DEIR.
 - b. The Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basin Plan does not specifically allow an incremental increase in EC by 500 $\mu\text{mhos/cm}$ over the source water, as does the Tulare Lake Basin Plan. While this standard may be used as guidance, the final EC value will be derived specifically for this facility based on background concentration, BPTC practices, and that which is achievable.
4. Impact 3.9.1 utilizes circular logic to conclude, "Compliance with the new WDRs will ensure that impacts regarding violation of water quality standards are less than significant." Please provide a full analysis and discussion of how the proposed facility design and operation will ensure sufficient compliance with WDRs.
5. Impact 3.9.4 does not address the potential impacts to groundwater resulting from the increased discharge of effluent at the facility. On page 3-61, the EIR recognizes that the facility is not currently meeting discharge limits to groundwater. It also states that, "Results to date indicate that the percolation ponds are not degrading background groundwater quality; however the Board requires at least 12 months of data to make a conclusion, so data is being analyzed." Although a final conclusion cannot yet be made, the EIR should provide currently available information regarding the depth to groundwater, groundwater gradient and groundwater quality upgradient and downgradient of the existing wastewater ponds. This information should be used to assess whether the existing discharge has impacted groundwater quality and the effects of the proposed expansion project.
6. Page 4-6: Please revise the analysis of Alternative No. 3. It is the same as the analysis for Alternative No. 2 and does not address the topic of Alternative No. 3.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at (916) 255-3140 or via email at rmerod@waterboards.ca.gov.

ROBIN MEROD
Water Resources Control Engineer
Waste Discharge to Land Program

cc: State Clearinghouse, Sacramento
Denise Wood, Stanislaus County Environmental Resources Dept, Modesto
Elena Nuno, Quad Knopf, Inc., Visalia
Robert Gillette, Carollo Engineers, Sacramento