



WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
17140 S. Avalon Blvd., Suite 210
Carson, CA 90746

AGENDA NO. 23

NOVEMBER 13, 2008 – Water Resources
Smith (Chair), Little
NOVEMBER 24, 2008 – Board Meeting
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Approved by: Rich Nagel

INFORMATION CALENDAR

CHLORIDE AND TDS PERMIT EXCEEDENCES

SUMMARY:

West Basin must comply with dozens of regulations and permits for all of its facilities. The Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility alone has permits to operate from agencies such as the Air Quality Management District, the State Department of Health Services, the local Fire Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The RWQCB issues three separate permits for the plant: one for discharge to the Barrier, one for the brine line out to the ocean, and one for the Title 22 operations. Thousands of water quality samples are taken per year to keep the plant in compliance with these permits.

Our permit limits for chlorides and total dissolved solids (TDS) are 250 mg/l and 800 mg/l respectively. Last month saw a quarterly reporting of 258 mg/l of chlorides and 858 mg/l of TDS. West Basin is not alone in this trend. Many water agencies are seeing chlorides rise as a result of the drought, conservation and increased use of Colorado River water instead of state project water. Attached is a memorandum from MWD which outlines this very concern at some of their plants which feed into the Hyperion (and therefore West Basin) wastewater shed.

After plant start up in 1995, West Basin was exceeded current TDS standards, but had higher reporting limits at that time. Since the new standards took effect in 2001, West Basin has been in full compliance with both TDS and Chloride. Staff has discussed this matter with the Department of Health Services who is sympathetic and emphasizes that the permit limits are secondary standards for drinking water. According to RWQCB staff, however, the permit limits are based on the Basin Plan (limits set per each water basin) and cannot be waived. RWQCB has not taken any enforcement action and will discuss with staff options for compliance under the law. RWQCB is also not re-opening any recycled water permits at this time until state policies for recycled water have been decided; therefore, it is unlikely that enforcement actions will be taken at this time. Staff is working on several fronts to see what can be done about the chlorides and TDS. UWS and staff are looking at what, if anything, can be done operationally to reduce chlorides and TDS. Included in this effort is conducting bench scale tests of an alternative coagulant, ferric sulfate, to see how effective that might be.

The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County has recently switched to ferric sulfate at some of their plants because of the chloride issue, and still remains out of compliance with the basin plan for their Whittier Narrows project. It is believed that due to the current water crisis and upcoming changes to recycled water policy, some leniency will be granted to recycled water agencies working to meet limits, but unable to due to outside forces. Staff is also looking at how the new Recycled Water Policy from the State Water Resources (SWR) Board may affect this trend. That policy is in draft form and may allow for salt balance studies which could give some relief to chloride levels. However, that policy and resulting report are over one to two

years away and West Basin is still permitted under current conditions which we are exceeding. Staff will keep the Board updated on this issue as additional information or developments occur.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

Goal 3, Water Quality – Provide high quality water that meets the needs of our customers.

COMMITMENT STATEMENT:

Water Quality – West Basin is committed to providing safe, high quality water by meeting current and anticipated water quality requirements.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Operational changes will most likely be implemented to resolve issue, and mandatory fines could be issued by RWQCB if matter not resolved.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

Out of Compliance with Permit WRR Order No. 01-043 – CI-7453 Issued by Regional Water Quality Control Board of Los Angeles.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed by the Water Resources Committee on November 13, 2008 and agendaized to the November 24, 2008 Board meeting as information for discussion.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This item is for information only.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit "A" – Trend Graphs
Exhibit "B" – MWD Memorandum on TDS