



Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

25 February 2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

MAR 04 2020

Jeremy Ballard
Stanislaus County
Planning and Community Development
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, CA 95354

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

CERTIFIED MAIL

7019 0700 0002 0111 6777

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION, GPA, REZ, UP, & DA APPLICATION NO. PLN2018-0093 - THE GENEZEN PROJECT, SCH#2020029017, STANISLAUS COUNTY

Pursuant to the State Clearinghouse's 5 February 2020 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the *Request for Review for the Negative Declaration* for the GPA, REZ, UP, & DA Application No. PLN2018-0093 - The Genezen Project, located in Stanislaus County.

Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan

The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State's water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be

KARL E. LONGLEY SCD, P.E., CHAIR | PATRICK PULUPA, ESQ., EXECUTIVE OFFICER

approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues. For more information on the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins*, please visit our website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/

Antidegradation Considerations

All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Implementation Policy is available on page 74 at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_201805.pdf

In part it states:

Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.

This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

II. Permitting Requirements

Cannabis General Order

Cannabis cultivation operations are required to obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's *General Waste Discharge Requirements and Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Waste Associated with Cannabis Cultivation Activities Order No. WQ 2017-0023-DWQ* (the Cannabis General Order). Cultivators that divert and store surface water (stream, lake, subterranean stream, etc.) to irrigate cannabis also need a valid water right.

The Water Boards Cannabis Cultivation Programs offer an easy to use online Portal for cultivators to apply for both Cannabis General Order coverage and a Cannabis Small Irrigation Use Registration (SIUR) water right, if needed. Visit the Water Boards Cannabis Cultivation Programs Portal at:

<https://public2.waterboards.ca.gov/CGO>

Additional information about the Cannabis General Order, Cannabis SIUR Program, and Portal can be found at: www.waterboards.ca.gov/cannabis

For questions about the Cannabis General Order, please contact the Central Valley Water Board's Cannabis Permitting and Compliance Unit at: centralvalleysacramento@waterboards.ca.gov or (916) 464-3291. For questions about Water Rights (Cannabis SIUR), please contact the State Water Board's Division of Water Rights at: CannabisReg@waterboards.ca.gov or (916) 319-9427.

Construction Storm Water General Permit

Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities (Construction General Permit), Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml

Industrial Storm Water General Permit

Storm water discharges associated with industrial sites must comply with the regulations contained in the Industrial Storm Water General Permit Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ. For more information on the Industrial Storm Water General Permit, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/storm_water/industrial_general_permits/index.shtml

Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Land

Pursuant to the State Board's Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Policy, the regulation of the septic system may be regulated under the local agency's management program.

Please note that only domestic wastewater coming from bathrooms and kitchens should be discharged to septic systems. Cannabis cultivation can generate other wastewaters such as irrigation runoff, water treatment effluent, cleaning agents, and wash waters. Discharges of these wastewaters to an on-site wastewater system such as a septic tank and leach field must obtain separate regulatory authorization, such as waste discharge requirements (WDRs), a conditional waiver of WDRs, or other permit mechanism, prior to discharge. The application to obtain WDRs or a conditional waiver of WDRs can take over a year to process and requires that you characterize the wastewater chemistry and volume. In lieu of discharging to a septic system, Water Board staff recommends that wastewaters from cannabis cultivation

activities be discharged to a holding tank and then hauled by a servicing company to a community wastewater treatment plant for disposal.

For more information on waste discharges to land, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/waste_to_land/index.shtml

Dewatering Permit

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Threat General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Threat Waiver) R5-2018-0085. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or Waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

For more information regarding the Low Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf

For more information regarding the Low Threat Waiver and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2018-0085.pdf

NPDES Permit

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of surface waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the Central Valley Water Board to obtain a NPDES Permit. For more information regarding the NPDES Permit and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/permit/>

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4856 or Nicholas.White@waterboards.ca.gov.

Original Signed By:

Nicholas White
Water Resource Control Engineer

cc: State Clearinghouse unit, Governor's Office of Planning and Research,
Sacramento (via email)