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## Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

October 8, 2018

Montecito Sanitary District  
1042 Monte Cristo Lane  
Santa Barbara, CA 93108  
Via email to [staff@montsan.org](mailto:staff@montsan.org)

Dear Board of Directors:

### **MONTECITY SANITARY DISTRICT'S COMPLIANCE WITH WASTEWATER PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

This letter is intended to clarify the position of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) regarding Montecito Sanitary District's (District) compliance history with wastewater treatment plant requirements under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CA0047899, Order No. R3-2012-0016. The District uses appropriate treatment technologies, consistently meets or exceeds all treatment requirements, and has not had any significant spills in the recent past. Nearby beach water quality is excellent and is not affected by operation of the wastewater treatment plant.

The Central Coast Water Board regulates the District's discharge through an NPDES permit that implements both state and federal water quality requirements. Because treated wastewater is discharged to the ocean, the permit is necessarily stringent and designed to protect ocean and beach water quality. Wastewater is discharged to the ocean through an outfall diffuser system 1,500 feet offshore at a depth of approximately 35 feet where the minimum initial dilution ratio of seawater to effluent is 89:1. Heal the Ocean studied the District's outfall system extensively in 2010. The study concluded that the discharge had no effect on beach water quality; this conclusion is corroborated by weekly beach sampling conducted by the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and by Heal the Bay's latest beach report card, which gives both Butterfly Beach and Hammonds Beach A+ ratings for dry-weather sampling.

The District's reporting and our own inspections indicate that the wastewater treatment plant is well maintained and is operated by experienced and trained staff. The District submits monitoring reports each month to the Central Coast Water Board containing results of daily, weekly, and monthly sampling. The results are almost always in compliance with the permit; the last permit violation by the District that required Central Coast Water Board enforcement was for an instantaneous total residual chlorine exceedance that occurred on June 21, 2014.

The January 2018 Montecito mudflows did not directly affect the treatment plant property, but the mudflows had a significant impact on the wastewater collection system and plant inflows. The District responded immediately and aggressively to protect both water quality and the District's assets. Central Coast Water Board staff was in frequent contact with your staff throughout the emergency, and we commend the District on its efforts towards protecting water quality during these extreme circumstances; the real stories of your staff's efforts to protect the wastewater facility and water quality following the debris flow event are impressive.

DR. JEAN-PIERRE WOLFF, CHAIR | JOHN M. ROBERTSON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Central Coast Water Board encourages all wastewater producers, especially those that discharge to the ocean, to recycle wastewater. Both potable and non-potable recycled wastewater are valuable resources, especially in water-short areas such as the Santa Barbara South Coast. We understand that the District is implementing a pilot test of reverse osmosis technology to produce water suitable for landscaping. We support this effort and look forward to reviewing the results.

In summary, it is our position that the District is appropriately funded and capitalized, has a dedicated, professional, and capable staff, and operates the wastewater plant in conformance with all state and federal water quality requirements with no negative effects on beach water quality.

Sincerely,

John M. Robertson  
Executive Officer

cc:

Diane Gabriel, General Manager, Montecito Sanitary District, [dgabriel@montsan.org](mailto:dgabriel@montsan.org)  
Nick Turner, General Manager, Montecito Water District, [nturner@montecitowater.com](mailto:nturner@montecitowater.com)  
Larry Fay, Santa Barbara County Environmental Health, [Lawrence.fay@sbcphd.org](mailto:Lawrence.fay@sbcphd.org)  
Das Williams, 1<sup>st</sup> District Supervisor, Santa Barbara County, [dwilliams@countyofsb.org](mailto:dwilliams@countyofsb.org)

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