



**California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region**



Alan C. Lloyd, Ph.D.
Agency Secretary

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

December 22, 2005

Mr. John Johnson, Manager
Regional Initiatives and Project Development
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation Lower Colorado Regional Office
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

12/27/05

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DATE:	INITIALS:	TO:
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1300 *DJL*

Dear Mr. Johnson:

**RE: NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) PERMIT
FOR THE HOLTVILLE TREATMENT WETLANDS PROJECT**

This letter is in response to your letter received on October 24, 2005 regarding the subject matter and requesting concurrence that the proposed action does not require a NPDES permit.

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to assist the Citizen's Congressional Task Force on the New River to construct a 30-acre pilot treatment wetland for the purpose of improving water quality in the Alamo River. The wetland is proposed for construction near the City of Holtville, Imperial County, California near the Imperial Irrigation District's Drop Structure 12. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) is a member of the Task Force and is aware of the Task Force's current treatment wetlands and water quality monitoring at the existing projects adjacent to the New River, as noted in your letter. About six (6) cubic feet per second of water will be diverted from the Alamo River above Drop Structure 12. The treated water leaving the wetland will be discharged to the Alamo River below Drop Structure 12.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) requires that NPDES permits contain criteria to ensure that discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States do not violate the water quality standards established for the waters. The standards establish water quality goals by designating beneficial uses for a specific water body and serve the regulatory basis for the establishment of water quality-based effluent limitations and controls (40CFR131.2). The State of California has been the delegated authority by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to implement the NPDES program throughout the state.

Title II of the federal legislation entitled the "Salton Sea Reclamation Act of 1998" provides for Reclamation to construct the subject wetland for research purposes. In addition, Title II provides the Department of the Interior with discretionary exemption regarding compliance with water quality standards of the Clean Water Act for the project, provided: (1) the water to be treated is Imperial Valley agricultural drainage, Alamo River water or New River water; and (2) the water from the wetlands is discharged into either the Alamo or New Rivers.

John Johnson
Bureau of Reclamation

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Based on the foregoing, we find that waste discharge requirements for this project are not necessary at this time and concur that the proposed project does not require a NPDES permit either. We ask however, that as the project materializes and monitoring data become available, that Reclamation provide us with copies of the data, particularly water quality data.

If you have any questions about this matter, please call Doug Wylie at (760) 346-6585.

Sincerely,



ROBERT PERDUE

Executive Officer

Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board

DW/jr

cc: Alexis Strauss, USEPA, Region XI, San Francisco
Eugenia McNaughton, USEPA, Region XI, San Francisco
Steve Muth, Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder City, NV
Bart Christensen, SWRCB, Sacramento
Mark Johnston, Imperial County Environmental Health Department, El Centro
Steve Charlton, Imperial Irrigation District, Imperial
Ron Enzwiler, Salton Sea Authority, La Quinta
Leon Lesicka, Citizen's Congressional Task Force on the New River, Brawley

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