State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health

MARK B HORTON, MD, MSPH
Director

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COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

January 23, 2009

Mark Hutchinson
Environmental programs Manager
San Luis Obispo County Dept of Public Works
County Government Center, Room 207
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Re: Draft EIR County of SLO, Los Osos Wastewater Project
State Clearinghouse No. 2007121034

Dear Mr. Hutchinson

The California Department of Public Health, Division of Drinking Water (CDPH), has review your Draft EIR dated November 14, 2008. The project in general will provide collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater in the Los Osos area. The current individual septic tank and leach field disposal of effluent in the Los Osos area will be abandoned. CDPH commends the County of SLO on their hard work and persistence over the years concerning this issue.

The two primary purposes of the project are the compliance with the Waste Discharge requirements of the RWQCB and alleviating groundwater contamination, primarily nitrates, which have occurred by the use of septic systems throughout the community of Los Osos. The Los Osos area consists of about 15,000 residents. Another important consideration of the project involves the water resources issues in the community mainly related to seawater intrusion.

The Draft EIR contains four alternatives that are examined at an equal level of detail. All four alternatives will meet the objectives of the project. Two main differences between these four alternatives and previous projects are the location of the treatment facility and the disposal method. The location of the treatment facility will be out-of-town and the disposal of the treated effluent will include a spray field. One portion of the project which has stayed consistent is the disposal at the Broderson site. The disposal of effluent at the Broderson site has been reduced significantly since the last project proposal. The CDPH recommends monitoring wells be established to monitor the effluent disposal at the Broderson site. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is the lead agency in the determination of the disposal site with relation to wastewater discharges. Based on the information received by CDPH at this time, we would recommend to the RWQCB that the Broderson site be considered a disposal

project. We would recommend additional information be gathered during the project to verify this conclusion utilizing properly located monitoring wells. Additionally, any updated information on the travel time from the disposal site to domestic water supply wells under various flow conditions needs to be presented to the RWQCB and CDPH.

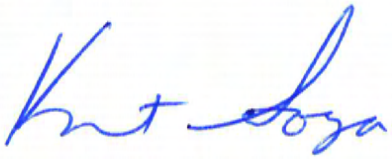
The Draft EIR includes the use of tertiary water irrigation meeting the Title 22 reclamation requirements. The County of SLO will need to provide to the CDPH and the RWQCB a Title 22 engineering report that complies with the Water Recycling Criteria if recycled water is proposed.

The spray field will be managed as an effluent disposal site. Any domestic water supply wells, including any private wells in the area, need to be identified and the distance to the spray disposal area confirmed.

The County of SLO and the local water agencies need to continue to work together to manage the water resources in the basin. The basin is identified as overdrawn at this time and seawater intrusion has been identified in some areas.

If you have any questions, please call this office at (805) 566-1326.

Sincerely,



Kurt Souza, P.E., Chief
Southern California Section
CDPH-DWFOB

Cc: SLO County EHD

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