



**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 2**

Caribbean Environmental Protection Division  
City View Plaza II-Suite 7000, #48 Rd. 165 km 1.2  
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00968-8069

**FACT SHEET**

**DRAFT NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM  
Carolina RWWTP  
PERMIT No. PR0023752**

This Fact Sheet sets forth the principle facts and technical rationale that serve as the legal basis for the requirements of the accompanying draft permit. The draft permit has been prepared in accordance with Clean Water Act (CWA) section 402 and its implementing regulations at Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), Parts 122 through 124, and the Water Quality Certificate (WQC) issued by the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) pursuant to CWA section 401 requirements.

Pursuant to 40 CFR 124.53, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico must either grant a certification pursuant to CWA section 401 or waive this certification before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may issue a final permit. On **January 24, 2020**, *DNER provided in the WQC that the allowed discharge will not cause violations to the applicable water quality standards* at the receiving water body if the limitations and monitoring requirements in the WQC are met. In accordance with CWA section 401, EPA has incorporated the conditions of the WQC into the draft permit. The WQC conditions are discussed in this Fact Sheet and are no less stringent than allowed by federal requirements. Additional requirements might apply to comply with other sections of the CWA. Review and appeals of limitations and conditions attributable to the WQC were made through the applicable procedures of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and not through EPA procedures.

**PART I. BACKGROUND**

**A. Permittee and Facility Description**

The Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA) (referred to throughout as the Permittee) has applied for renewal of its **Carolina RWWTP** National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The Permittee is discharging pursuant to NPDES Permit No. **PR0023752**. The Permittee submitted Application Forms 1, and 2A dated **September 4, 2015**, and applied for an NPDES permit to discharge treated wastewater from Carolina RWWTP, Carolina, called the facility. A reapplication was submitted by the Permittee on **June 26, 2019**. The facility is classified as a **major** discharger by EPA in accordance with the EPA rating criteria.

The Permittee **owns and** operates the **wastewater treatment plant which provides primary treatment**. Attachment A of this Fact Sheet provides a map of the area around the facility and a flow schematic of the facility.

The treatment system consists of the following:

**The Carolina RWWTP is a publicly owned treatment works (POTW) that treats sanitary and industrial wastewaters for the Municipalities of Carolina, Trujillo Alto, Loíza, Canóvanas, Rio Grande, and some portions of San Juan. It provides advanced primary treatment and discharges its effluent to the Atlantic Ocean.**

Sanitary wastewater is processed through the following units:

- Bar Screen.
- Grit Chambers.
- Primary Sedimentation Tanks.
- Polymer Addition.
- Chlorine Contact Chambers.

**Wastewater treatment processes at the plant include screening, grit removal, sedimentation, and chlorination before discharging to the Atlantic Ocean. Sludge is pumped to a holding tank. Then, sludge is filtered-pressed. And it is finally disposed in the Peñuelas Valley Landfill and the Coqui Landfill facilities.**

### Summary of Permittee and Facility Information

<b>Permittee</b>	Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA)
<b>Facility contact, title, phone</b>	Mrs. Irma M. López, Executive Director Compliance and Quality Control (787) 620-2270
<b>Permittee (mailing) address</b>	Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority P.O. Box 7066 Barrio Obrero Station Santurce, Puerto Rico 00916-7066
<b>Facility (location) address</b>	Road 187, Km 16.5 Torrecilla Alta Ward Loiza, PR 00772
<b>Type of facility</b>	Publicly-owned Treatment Works
<b>Pretreatment program</b>	Yes
<b>Facility monthly average flow</b>	45.0 MGD (million gallons per day)
<b>Facility design flow</b>	90.0 MGD (million gallons per day)
<b>Facility classification</b>	Major

### B. Discharge Points and Receiving Water Information

Wastewater is discharged from Outfall 001 to the Atlantic Ocean, a water of the United States. The draft permit authorizes the discharge from the following discharge point(s):

<b>Outfall</b>	<b>Effluent description</b>	<b>Outfall latitude</b>	<b>Outfall longitude</b>	<b>Receiving water name and classification</b>
001	Advanced Primary treatment wastewater.	18°, 27', 44" N	65°, 53', 24" W	Atlantic Ocean, Class SB waters

As indicated in the Puerto Rico Water Quality Standards (PRWQS) Regulations, the designated uses for Class SB receiving waters include:

- Identified segments of coastal water identified for:
  - Primary and secondary recreation; and
  - Propagation and preservation of desirable species, including threatened and endangered species.

CWA section 303(d) requires the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to develop a list of impaired waters, establish priority rankings for waters on the list, and develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for those waters. The receiving water has not been determined to have water quality impairments for one or more of the designated uses as determined by section 303(d) of the CWA.

### C. Modification of Secondary Treatment Requirements

PRASA has requested a modification, under section 301(h) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. section 1311(h), of the secondary treatment requirements contained in section 301(b)(1)(B) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. section 1311(b)(1)(B) to discharge wastewater receiving less than secondary treatment from the Carolina RWWTP to the Atlantic Ocean. Secondary treatment requirements are defined in regulations at 40 CFR Part 133 in terms of effluent quality for five-day measure of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>), total suspended solids (TSS), and pH.

As part of renewal permit, the EPA is required to review all available information on the Carolina RWWTP discharge to determine whether the discharge meets or will meet the requirements of CWA section 301(h) and its implementing regulations during the next permit term. Based upon review of information provided by PRASA and other supporting documents, the EPA has approved PRASA's request for renewal of its modification of secondary treatment requirements for the Carolina RWWTP, described in a 2014 Tentative Decision document accompanying the public notice of the draft permit. The Tentative Decision is based on the EPA's evaluation of information provided in PRASA's 2007 and 2012 re-applications for permit renewal with a 301(h) modification from secondary treatment requirements, and a mixing zone; Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs); receiving water monitoring reports; and other information deemed necessary for the determining whether to grant or deny a modification from secondary treatment requirements.

The permit establishes effluent limitations and conditions that are consistent with the requirements of the CWA and PRWQS. For additional information on the Tentative Decision, please refer to EPA Region 2's 2014 *Decision Document - Analysis the Section 301(h) Modification of Secondary Treatment Application for the Carolina Regional Wastewater Treatment*, NPDES No. PR0023752.

#### **D. Mixing Zone/Dilution Allowance**

As part of its CWA section 401 certification of the modified permit application, the EQB has authorized a mixing zone or dilution allowance for this discharge in accordance with Rule 1305 of PRWQS. The mixing zone or dilution allowance is defined as both the critical initial dilution (CID) ratio of seawater-to-wastewater and a geometric size. In 2015, PRASA submitted an application for a mixing zone to the EQB. The CID on which the current WQC and NPDES permit is based is **116:1**. The existing mixing zone geometry was also developed in the 1999 MZA. Based on recent remotely operated vehicle (ROV) inspections of the outfall and diffuser, conducted after the existing WQC and NPDES permits were issued, the coordinates were recalculated and are slightly different than those specified in the existing WQC and NPDES permit. The overall mixing zone shape, size, and distance from the diffuser to the EOMZ remains the same as in the existing WQC and NPDES permit.

Under PRWQS, mixing zones are authorized for specific parameters and do not apply to the entire effluent discharged. Therefore, as indicated in its CWA 401 certification, EQB has authorized a mixing zone for the following parameters for the next permit term:

- Non-conventional pollutants (color, total nitrogen, free cyanide, surfactants, turbidity, pH, and dissolved oxygen;
- Metals (copper, mercury, sulfide, thallium and zinc); and
- Acute and chronic toxicity.

Water quality-based effluent limitations have been developed for the parameters listed above based on a CID of **116:1**. All other parameters limited in the permit have been established with no dilution allowances. Additional information on the basis of these limitations is provided in Part II.A of this Fact Sheet.

As part of authorizing a mixing zone, EQB requires that PRASA conduct a one year monitoring program to obtain the necessary data to validate the Mixing Zone and ensure that water quality standards are met at the edge of the mixing zone. Consistent with EQB's CWA 401 certification on this permit action, in addition to CWA section 301(h) requirements, receiving water monitoring on an annual basis has been established in the permit.

#### **E. Compliance Orders/Consent Decrees**

The Permittee has a Consent Decree with the Agency (**Civil Action No 3:15-CV-02283(JAG)**) in which the facility is included. This consent decree does not affect this permit action.

#### **F. Summary of Basis for Effluent Limitations and Permit Conditions - General**

The effluent limitations and permit conditions in the permit have been developed to ensure compliance with the following, as applicable:

- Clean Water Act section 401 certification requirements;
- NPDES regulations (40 CFR Part 122);
- Modifying Secondary Treatment Requirements Under Section 301(h) of the CWA (40 CFR 125, Subpart G);
- PRWQS (April 2016);

- Biosolids (Sewage Sludge) requirements (40 CFR Parts 257, 258 and 503); and
- Pretreatment requirements (40 CFR Part 403).

## PART II. RATIONALE FOR EFFLUENT LIMITATIONS AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

CWA section 301(b) and 40 CFR 122.44(d) require that permits include limitations more stringent than applicable technology-based requirements where necessary to achieve applicable water quality standards. In addition, 40 CFR 122.44(d)(1)(i) requires that permits include effluent limitations for all pollutants that are or may be discharged at levels that cause, have the reasonable potential to cause, or contribute to an exceedance of a water quality criterion, including a narrative criterion. The process for determining reasonable potential and calculating water quality-based effluent limits (WQBELs) is intended to protect the designated uses of the receiving water and achieve applicable water quality criteria. Where reasonable potential has been established for a pollutant, but there is no numeric criterion for the pollutant, WQBELs must be established using (1) EPA criteria guidance under CWA section 304(a), supplemented where necessary by other relevant information; (2) an indicator parameter for the pollutant of concern; or (3) a calculated numeric water quality criterion, such as a proposed state criterion or policy interpreting the state's narrative criterion, supplemented with other relevant information, as provided in 40 CFR 122.44(d)(1)(vi).

The effluent limitations and permit conditions in the permit have been developed to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations, including PRWQS. The basis for each limitation or condition is discussed below.

### A. Effluent Limitations

The permit establishes **both Technology-based Effluent Limitations (TBELs) and WQBELs** for several pollutants and the basis for these limitations are discussed below.

1. **Flow:** An effluent limitation for flow has been established in the permit for **90.0 MGD** as a Daily Maximum. Monitoring conditions are applied pursuant to 40 CFR 122.21(j)(4)(ii) and EQB's WQC.

The frequency monitoring for flow shall be continuous with a flow meter.

2. **5-Day Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>):** The effluent concentration and percent removal limitations are based on the federal definition of primary or equivalent treatment at 40 CFR 125.60, EPA's 2014 Tentative Decision document, and an evaluation of existing effluent quality performed by EPA. In addition, PRWQS provide a narrative water quality criterion for BOD that states the allowable level of BOD will be determined based on a cases-by-case basis with consideration of the assimilative capacity of the receiving water and compliance with the dissolved oxygen standard. The EPA has carried over the effluent limitations for BOD<sub>5</sub> from the existing permit. The permit also carries over the monitoring and reporting only requirement for an average weekly. A mass-based limitation of **22,166 kg/day** has been established based on an average monthly design flow of **90 MGD**, as established in EQB's final WQC. An average monthly limit of 30% removal has also been established in accordance with 40 CFR 125.60. Between 2017 and 2019, monthly average removal rates for BOD<sub>5</sub> ranged between **28 (December 2018)** and **67 percent (May 2019)**. These limitations combined with a monitoring and reporting only requirement for dissolved oxygen will assure attainment of the narrative water quality criterion for BOD.

The permit also requires influent monitoring and reporting in accordance with 40 CFR 122.44(i) to meet the requirement of the percent removal limitation (see Part II C.1. — Monitoring Requirements— of this Fact Sheet).

The monitoring frequency of twice per week with a 24-hour composite sample type has been carried over from the existing permit.

3. **Total Suspended Solids (TSS):** The effluent concentration and percent removal limitations are based on the federal definition of primary or equivalent treatment at 40 CFR 125.60, EPA's 2014 Tentative Decision document, and an evaluation of existing effluent quality performed by EPA. In addition, PRWQS provide a narrative water quality criterion for TSS that states that solids from wastewater sources shall not cause deposition in or be deleterious to the existing or designated uses of the water body. The EPA has carried over the effluent limitations for TSS from the existing permit. The permit establishes an average monthly limitation of **70 mg/L** and a monitoring and reporting only requirement for an average weekly. A mass-based limitation of **11,935 kg/day** has been established based on an average monthly design flow of **90 MGD**, as established in EQB's final WQC. An average monthly limit of 60% removal for TSS has been carried over from the existing permit and is based on Best Professional Judgment. This is a higher removal rate than required by section 301(h) regulations at 40 CFR 125.60 since the facility is able to

achieve a higher removal rate through the addition of polymers. Removal rates for TSS ranged between **48% (November 2018)** and **85% (September 2018)**.

The permit also requires influent monitoring and reporting in accordance with 40 CFR 122.44(i) to meet the requirement of the percent removal limitation (see Part II.C.1—Monitoring Requirements— of this Fact Sheet).

The monitoring frequency of twice per week with a 24-hour composite sample type has been carried over from the existing permit.

4. **pH:** The permittee has not requested a modification from secondary treatment standards at 40 CFR 133 for pH. Therefore, the exiting permit established effluent limitations for pH based on the secondary treatment standards of 6.0 to 9.0 pH standard units. Review of effluent data indicates that PRASA will generally be able to meet these effluent limitations at the Carolina RWWTP. An instantaneous minimum limitation of 6.0 pH standard units and an instantaneous maximum limitation of 9.0 pH standard units have been carried over from the existing permit.

The monitoring frequency of once per day with a grab sample type has been carried over from the existing permit.

5. **Temperature:** The effluent limitation for temperature is based on the water quality criterion for all waters in Puerto Rico as specified in Rule 1303.1 D of PRWQS, and the WQC.
6. **Enterococci Density:** The discharge consists of domestic sewage that is a source of pathogens. To ensure that the recreational use of the water body is met, a compliance schedule for the first 3 years of the permit and effluent limitations for enterococci were developed in the permit and are based on the water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2 B. 2.c of PRWQS, and the WQC. EPA establishes a monitoring frequency of the enterococci density in terms of geometric mean of at least six representative samples taken sequentially shall not exceed 35 colonies/100 mL during a 90-days interval. A compliance schedule was granted to this parameter.
7. **Dissolved Oxygen (DO):** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2 B.2.a of PRWQS, and the WQC.
8. **Total Residual Chlorine (TRC):** TRC has been identified as a contaminant of concern since the facility uses chlorination to disinfect the effluent to minimize the discharge of pathogens. Rule 1303.1.J.1 of PRWQS establishes a water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters of 7.5 µg/L. A compliance schedule was granted to this parameter.
9. **Color:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.B.2.e of PRWQS, and the WQC.
10. **Turbidity:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.B.2.f of PRWQS, and the WQC.
11. **Taste and Odor Producing Substances:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.B.2.g of PRWQS, and the WQC.
12. **Surfactants:** The effluent limitation, not to exceed 500 µg/L at the edge of the mixing zone, is based on the water quality criterion for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2 B.2.i of PRWQS, and the WQC.
13. **Oil and Grease:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.H of PRWQS, and the WQC.
14. **Suspended, Colloidal or Settleable Solids:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.E of PRWQS, and the WQC.
15. **Solids and Other Matter:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.A of PRWQS, and the WQC.
16. **TKN:** The effluent limitation is needed in order to calculate total nitrogen and to provide data used to validate the mathematical model used to assess the farfield dissolved oxygen demand as required in the PR Mixing Zone and Bioassay Guidelines

- 17. Copper, Nickel, Free Cyanide, Sulfide, Thallium, Lead, Mercury, and Zinc:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.I.1 of PRWQS, Rule 1305 Mixing Zones, and the WQC.
- 18. Nitrogen, Total (as NO<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub>):** An effluent limitation has been established for total nitrogen based on the water quality criterion of 5.00 mg/l for **Class SB** waters as specified in Rule 1303.2 of PRWQS. Effluent data show that total nitrogen concentrations exceed the water quality criterion.
- 19. Whole Effluent Toxicity**

EPA defines Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) as “the aggregate toxic effect of an effluent measured directly by a toxicity test” (54 FR 23868, June 2, 1989). Article 3.1.9 of PRWQS provides that all waters of Puerto Rico shall not contain any substance at such concentration which, either alone or as result of synergistic effects with other substances is toxic or produces undesirable physiological responses in human, fish or other fauna or flora. Under section 101(a)(3) of the Clean Water Act, this is referred to as the general narrative standard of “no toxics in toxic amounts.” PRWQS definitions include a numeric interpretation of this narrative standard as for toxicity as meeting a criterion of 0.3 Acute Toxic Units (TUA) and 1.0 Chronic Toxic Units (TUC). As part of the NPDES permitting program, whole effluent toxicity (WET) testing is routinely used to evaluate both the toxicity of wastewater discharges and compliance with narrative water quality standards that prohibit the discharge of toxic pollutants in toxic amounts, or otherwise provide for the maintenance and propagation of a balanced population of aquatic life.

Since effluent toxicity is inversely related to the effect concentration (the lower the effect concentration, the higher the toxicity in the effluent), concentration-based toxicity measurements are typically expressed as toxic units (TUs) to better illustrate the magnitude of potential toxicity. In EPA’s Technical Support Document (TSD) for Water Quality-based Toxics Control, EPA recommends that in the absence of a numeric criterion for the parameter toxicity, a criterion maximum concentration (CMC) of 0.3 Toxic Units Acute (TUA) and criterion continuous concentration (CCC) of 1.0 Toxic Units Chronic (TUC) be used to ensure aquatic life protection against acute and chronic toxicity in the receiving water (EPA 1991). Article 1 of PRWQS provides that TUA and TUC be defined by the Lethal Concentration (LC50) of the tested effluent at which 50 percent of the test organisms die, where  $TUA = 100 \div LC50$ ; and the No Observed Effect Concentration (NOEC), where  $TUC = 100 \div NOEC$ . The NOEC is the highest tested effluent concentration (in percent effluent) that does not cause an adverse effect on the test organism (i.e., the highest effluent concentration at which the values for the observed responses are not statistically different from the control).

For the purpose of the section 301(h) evaluation, EPA evaluated receiving water toxicity with consideration of a CID of 116:1. EPA applied the CID to acute and chronic water quality criteria of 0.3 TUA and 1.0 TUC to determine the maximum allowable level of effluent toxicity or wasteload allocation (WLA) that would still ensure attainment of water quality criteria for toxicity at the edge of the mixing zone. EPA calculated acute and chronic WLAs of 34.8 TUA and 116 TUC, respectively, and then compared the WLAs to effluent WET data.

Pursuant to the current modified permit, PRASA is required to conduct acute and chronic WET testing on flow-weighted 24-hour composite effluent samples using the mysid shrimp (*Mysidopsis bahia*), sea urchin (*Arbacia punctulata*); and sheepshead minnow (*Cyprinodon variegatus*). These aquatic tests are laboratory tests and are designed to measure the biological effect (e.g., an acute effect such as mortality and chronic effects such as impairment of growth and reproduction) of the effluent on the aquatic organism.

The discharger provided the document *Update of Supplemental 301(h) Waiver Application Information for the Carolina Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (NPDES Permit PR0023752)* (May 15, 2019) as part of the Clean Water Act §301(h) Waiver and Mixing Zone application. This document included Chapter 4: Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing, and tabulated WET results from December 2006 through April 2015. For the purposes of this evaluation, the EPA used WET data from January 2010 through April 2015 as being most representative of current conditions at the plant. Based on available WET data included in the application, all TUA values were below the acute WLA whereas several chronic WET tests reported TUC values that exceeded the chronic WLA.

Since chronic toxicity has been observed, EPA has determined that the modified discharge will cause, has the reasonable potential to cause, or contributes to an excursion above the narrative criterion for chronic toxicity. Therefore, with consideration of dilution, EPA has proposed a maximum daily effluent limitation of **115.633 TUC** for chronic toxicity in the draft permit, expressed as a minimum No Effects Concentration of **0.8648 %**. Based on review of more recent effluent WET data, EPA believes that the Carolina RWWTP will be able to meet this effluent limitation upon permit issuance.

EPA is also requiring that the discharger develop a plan for a toxicity reduction evaluation (TRE) within the first three months of the permit term. This plan may be an update of that developed for the previous NPDES permit cycle. Violation of the limitation for chronic toxicity would trigger accelerated monitoring for twelve weeks. During the accelerated testing period an additional violation of the limitation would require activation of the TRE workplan, and implementation of their strategy to identify and abate the source of toxicity.

## B. Effluent Limitations Summary Table

### 1. Outfall Number 001.

Parameter	Units	Effluent limitations					
		Averaging period	Highest Reported Value (1)	Existing limits	Interim limits	Final limits	Basis
BOD <sub>5</sub>	mg/L	Average monthly	--	130	n/a	120.13	TBEL
BOD <sub>5</sub> percent removal	%	Daily Minimum	67	30	n/a	30	TBEL
Color	Pt-CO	Maximum Daily	50	<b>76</b>	n/a	85	WQBEL
Copper	µg/L	Daily maximum	37.1	190.4	n/a	57.96	WQBEL
Cyanide, Free	µg/L	Daily maximum	7.11	2.22	n/a	7.6	WQBEL
Dissolved Oxygen	mg/L	Daily Minimum	4.5	Monitor only	n/a	Monitor only	WQBEL
Enterococci Density	col/100 mL	--	<b>2.0</b>	≤ 35	MR	≤ 35/100 mL	WQBEL
Flow	MGD	Average monthly Daily maximum	47.3	45 90.0	n/a n/a	-- 90.0	WQBEL
Lead	µg/L	Daily maximum	7.7	8.52	n/a	8.52	WQBEL
Mercury	µg/L	Daily maximum	0.193	0.203	n/a	0.242	WQBEL
Nickel	µg/L	Daily maximum	5.0	17.6	n/a	8.28	WQBEL
Oil and grease	mg/L	Average monthly Maximum Daily	32.4	Monitor only	n/a n/a	Monitor only	WQBEL
pH	SU	Daily Minimum Daily maximum	6.5 - 7.6	6.0 – 9.0	n/a	6.0 – 9.0	WQBEL
Residual Chlorine	µg/L	Daily maximum	0.75 mg/L	0.50 mg/L	500	7.5	WQBEL
Solids and Other Matters		--	--	Monitor only	n/a n/a	Monitor only	WQBEL
Sulfide	µg/L	Daily maximum	--	188.32	n/a	726.1	WQBEL
Surfactants	µg/L	Daily maximum	3,820	13,246	n/a	7,032	WQBEL
Suspended, Colloidal or Settleable Solids	mL/L	Daily maximum	--	Monitor only	n/a	Monitor only	WQBEL
Taste and Odor-producing Substances	--	--	--	Monitor only	n/a	Monitor only	WQBEL

Parameter	Units	Effluent limitations					
		Averaging period	Highest Reported Value (1)	Existing limits	Interim limits	Final limits	Basis
Temperature	Degrees Celsius	Instantaneous Maximum	31.2	32.2	-- --	32.2	WQBEL
Thallium	µg/L	Daily maximum	1.0	12.0	n/a	2.09	WQBEL
TKN	µg/L	Daily maximum	--	--	n/a	Monitor only	WQBEL
Total Nitrogen	µg/L	Daily maximum	24,000	--	n/a	50,000	WQBEL
TSS	mg/L	Average monthly	--	70	n/a	--	TBEL
TSS percent removal	%	Daily Minimum	85	60	n/a	60	TBEL
Turbidity	NTU	Daily maximum	93	168	n/a	169	WQBEL
Zinc	µg/L	Daily maximum	362.0	151.30	n/a	475.06	WQBEL

#### **Notes, Footnotes and Abbreviations**

Note: Dashes (--) indicate there are no effluent data, no limitations, or no monitoring requirements for this parameter.

(1) Wastewater data from DMRs dated July 31, 2017 to June 30, 2019.

## **2. Outfall 001 Narrative Limitations**

- The waters of Puerto Rico shall not contain any substance, attributable to the discharge at such concentration which, either alone or as result of synergistic effects with other substances, is toxic or produces undesirable physiological responses in humans, fish, or other fauna or flora.
- The discharge shall not cause the presence of oil sheen in the receiving water body.
- The waters of Puerto Rico shall not contain floating debris, scum, or other floating materials attributable to discharges in amounts sufficient to be unsightly or deleterious to the existing or designated uses of the water body.
- Solids from wastewater sources shall not cause deposition in or be deleterious to the existing or designated uses of the waters.
- Taste and odor-producing substances shall not be present in amounts that will interfere with primary contact recreation or will render any undesirable taste or odor to edible aquatic life.
- No toxic substances shall be discharged, in toxic concentrations, other than those allowed as specified in the NPDES permit. Those toxic substances included in the permit renewal application, but not regulated by the NPDES permit, shall not exceed the concentrations specified in the applicable regulatory limitations.

## **C. Monitoring Requirements**

NPDES regulations at 40 CFR 122.48 require that all permits specify requirements for recording and reporting monitoring results. The Part III of the Permit establishes monitoring and reporting requirements to implement federal and state requirements. The following provides the rationale for the monitoring and reporting requirements for this facility.

### **1. Influent Monitoring Requirements**

To calculate percent removal values, influent monitoring is required for BOD<sub>5</sub> and TSS in accordance with 40 CFR 133.102. Influent monitoring must be conducted before any treatment, other than de-gritting, and before any addition of any internal waste stream.

### **2. Effluent Monitoring Requirements**

Effluent monitoring frequency and sample type have been established in accordance with the requirements of 40 CFR 122.44(i) and recommendations in EPA's TSD. Consistent with 40 CFR Part 136 monitoring data for toxic metals must be expressed as total recoverable metal. Effluent monitoring and

analyses shall be conducted in accordance with EPA test procedures approved under 40 CFR Part 136, Guidelines Establishing Test Procedures for the Analysis of Pollutants Under the Clean Water Act, as amended. For situations where there may be interference, refer to Solutions to Analytical Chemistry Problems with Clean Water Act Methods (EPA 821-R-07-002). A licensed chemist authorized to practice the profession in Puerto Rico shall certify all chemical analyses. All bacteriological tests shall be certified by a microbiologist or licensed medical technologist authorized to practice the profession in Puerto Rico.

The sampling point for Outfall 001 shall be located immediately after the primary flow measuring device of the effluent of the treatment system.

#### **D. Compliance with Federal Anti-Backsliding Requirements and Puerto Rico's Anti-Degradation Policy**

Federal regulations at 40 CFR 131.12 require that state water quality standards include an anti-degradation policy consistent with the federal policy. The discharge is consistent with the anti-degradation provision of 40 CFR 131.12, 72 Federal Register 238 (December 12, 2007, pages 70517-70526) and EQB's *Anti-Degradation Policy Implementation Procedure* in Attachment A of PRWQS. In addition, CWA sections 402(o)(2) and 303(d)(4) and federal regulations at 40 CFR 122.44(l) prohibit backsliding in NPDES permits. Further, the Region 2 Antibacksliding Policy provides guidance regarding relaxation of effluent limitations based on water quality for Puerto Rico NPDES permits. These anti-backsliding provisions require effluent limitations in a reissued permit to be as stringent as those in the previous permit with some exceptions where limitations may be relaxed.

- Existing effluent limitations for **Fecal Coliforms, and Nitrogen Silver** have been removed based on CWA section 402(o)(2)(B)(i). CWA section 402(o)(2)(B)(i) authorizes the backsliding of effluent limitations if information is available which was not available at the time of permit issuance that would have justified the application of a less stringent effluent limitation at the time of permit issuance. Based on review of effluent data since issuance of the existing permit, the modified discharge does not show a reasonable potential for the exceedance of water quality criteria for these parameters.

### **PART III. RATIONALE FOR STANDARD AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

#### **A. Standard Conditions**

In accordance with 40 CFR 122.41, standard conditions that apply to all NPDES permits have been incorporated by reference in Part IV.A.1 of the permit and expressly in Attachment B of the permit. The Permittee must comply with all standard conditions and with those additional conditions that are applicable to specified categories of permits under 40 CFR 122.42 and specified in Part IV.A.2 of the Permit.

#### **B. Special Conditions**

In accordance with 40 CFR 122.42 and other regulations cited below, special conditions have been incorporated into the permit. This section addresses the justification for special studies, additional monitoring requirements, Best Management Practices, Compliance Schedules, and/or special provisions for POTWs as needed. The special conditions for this facility are as follows:

##### **1. Special Conditions from the Water Quality Certificate**

In accordance with 40 CFR 124.55, EPA has established Special Conditions from the WQC in the permit that EQB determined were necessary to meet PRWQS. The Special Conditions established in this section are only those conditions from the WQC that have not been established in other parts of the permit.

##### **2. Best Management Practices (BMP) Plan**

In accordance with 40 CFR 122.2 and 122.44(k), BMPs are schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the pollution to waters of the United States. The Permittee is required to develop a BMP Plan in Special Condition 23 of the permit to control or abate the discharge of pollutants.

##### **3. Compliance Schedules**

The Permittee's effluent data indicate that the facility might not be able to consistently comply with the final effluent limitation for Enterococci and TRC; therefore, a schedule of compliance has been authorized in the permit in accordance with 40 CFR 122.47 and Special Condition 1.u (under PART IV.B) of the

WQC, which includes interim deadlines for progress or reports of progress toward compliance with the conditions of the permit. The compliance schedule for Enterococci and TRC is established at for 36 months after the effective date of the permit to allow the Permittee sufficient time to achieve compliance with the newly established effluent limitation. This schedule is provided in consideration of the time it would require for the Permittee to undertake steps needed to modify or install treatment facilities, operations, or other required measures.

#### 4. Other Special Conditions

**Prohibited Discharge Standards:** 40 CFR 403.5 forbids the discharge of any pollutant(s) to a POTW that cause pass through or interference. These national standards apply to all IUs to a POTW, regardless of whether or not the POTW has an approved pretreatment program or whether the industrial user has been issued a control mechanism or permit. These standards are intended to provide general protection for POTWs. However, their lack of specific pollutant limitations creates the need for additional controls, namely Categorical Pretreatment Standards and Local Limits.

**Pre-treatment:** Pursuant to the authority under Section 307 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1317, EPA promulgated 40 C.F.R. Part 403 - General Pretreatment Regulations for Existing and New Sources of Pollution ("Pretreatment Regulations"). This Part establishes responsibilities of federal, state and local government, industry and the public to implement National Pretreatment Standards to control pollutants which pass through or interfere with treatment processes in publicly owned treatment works or which may contaminate sewage sludge. It requires that the POTW develop and implement procedures to identify industrial users who contribute pollutants to the POTW and monitor their compliance with pretreatment standards.

**Biosolids:** Pursuant to the authority under Section 309 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. §1345, EPA promulgated 40 C.F.R. Part 503 – Standards for the Use or Dispose of Sewage Sludge. This part establishes standards, which consist of general requirements, pollutant limits, management practices, and operational standards, for the final use or disposal of sewage sludge generated during the treatment of domestic sewage in treatment works. This part includes standards for sewage sludge applied to the land, placed on a surface disposal site, or fired in a sewage sludge incinerator. It requires pathogen and alternative vector attraction reduction requirements for sewage sludge applied to the land or placed on a surface disposal site.

### PART IV. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF OTHER FEDERAL LAWS OR EXECUTIVE ORDERS

#### A. Coastal Zone Management Act

Under 40 CFR 122.49(d), and in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, 16 *United States Code* (U.S.C.) 1451 *et seq.* section 307(c) of the act and its implementing regulations (15 CFR Part 930), EPA may not issue an NPDES permit that affects land or water use in the coastal zone until the Permittee certifies that the proposed activity complies with the Coastal Zone Management Program in Puerto Rico (CZMP), and that the discharge is certified by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to be consistent with the Commonwealth's CZMP. The Permittee has indicated the outfall is in a coastal area managed by the Commonwealth's CZMP which has been consistent with the program. The Puerto Rico Planning Board granted a Certificate of Consistency with the CZMP on February 11, 2015.

#### B. Endangered Species Act

Under 40 CFR 122.49(c), EPA is required pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.* and its implementing regulations (50 CFR Part 402) to ensure, in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that the discharge authorized by the permit is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or adversely affect its critical habitat. On April 16, 2009, EPA designated PRASA (a non-Federal representative) to conduct informal consultations or prepare a biological assessment for Section 7 Consultations, according to 50

CFR 402.8. In a letter dated **November 3, 2014**, USFWS concludes that their July 14, 2008 determination that the 301(h) waiver would not likely adversely affect the Antillean manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*).

### **C. Environmental Justice**

EPA has performed an Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis for the discharge in accordance with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Population and Low-Income Populations*, and EPA's Plan EJ 2014. EJ is the right to a safe, healthy, productive and sustainable environment for all, where "environment" is considered in its totality to include the ecological, physical, social, political, aesthetic and economic environments. In the NPDES permitting program, the public participation process provides opportunities to address EJ concerns by providing appropriate avenues for public participation, seeking out and facilitating involvement of those potentially affected.

In February 2020, EPA did an EJ document for communities surrounding the Carolina RWWTP with the most recent data available for 2010, document attached. Such document shows the community of concern, 1-mile radius from the Carolina RWWTP, is considered a Low-Income Community but it does not have a disproportional environmental burden on the municipality of Carolina where the facility is located.

### **D. Coral Reef Protection**

Under Executive Order 13089, *Coral Reef Protection*, EPA is required to ensure that discharge authorized under the permit will not degrade any coral reef ecosystem. Corals or coral ecosystems are in the vicinity of the discharge. In a letter dated August 13, 2013 from National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) concluded that the project is not likely to adversely affect corals in critical habitat. Also, coral species proposed for listing in PR are not present in the area of the outfall discharge. Therefore, the continued operation of the outfalls will have no effect in the species.

### **E. Climate Change**

EPA has considered climate change when developing the conditions of the permit. This is in accordance with the draft *National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change* that identifies ways to address climate change impacts by NPDES permitting authorities (77 Federal Register 63, April 2, 2012, 19661-19662). Climate change is expected to affect surface waters in several ways, affecting both human health and ecological endpoints. As outlined in the draft National Water Program 2012 Strategy, EPA is committed to protecting surface water, drinking water, and ground water quality, and diminishing the risks of climate change to human health and the environment, through a variety of adaptation and mitigation strategies. These strategies include encouraging communities and NPDES permitting authorities to incorporate climate change strategies into their water quality planning, encouraging green infrastructure and recommending that water quality authorities consider climate change impacts when developing water load and load allocations for new TMDLs, identifying and protecting designated uses at risk from climate change impacts. The 2010 *NPDES Permit Writers' Manual* also identifies climate change considerations for establishing low-flow conditions that account for possible climatic changes to stream flow. The conditions established in the permit are consistent with the draft National Water Program 2012 Strategy.

### **F. National Historic Preservation Act – Not applicable since this is a renovation.**

### **G. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management**

Under 40 CFR 122.49, EPA is required to ensure that the discharge authorized by the permit will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as specified in section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* On April 16, 2009, EPA designated PRASA (a non-Federal representative) to conduct informal consultations or prepare a biological assessment for Section 7 Consultations, according to 50 CFR 402.8. On a letter dated August 7, 2013, in relation to the NMFS responsibilities under Section 7, determines that the outfall is and will be insignificant in the area of the discharge.

## **PART V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The procedures for reaching a final decision on the draft permit are set forth in 40 CFR Part 124 and are described in the public notice for the draft permit, which is published in **El Vocero**. Included in the public notice are requirements for the submission of comments by a specified date, procedures for requesting a hearing and the nature of the hearing, and other procedures for participation in the final agency decision. EPA will consider and respond in writing to all significant comments received during the public comment period in reaching a final decision on the draft permit. Requests for information or questions regarding the draft permit should be directed to

Miguel A. Batista  
EPA Region 2, Caribbean Environmental Protection Division  
Permit Writer Phone: 787-977-5823  
Permit Writer Email: batista.miguel@epa.gov

A copy of the draft permit is also available on EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/region02/water/permits.html](http://www.epa.gov/region02/water/permits.html).

## ATTACHMENT A — FACILITY MAP AND FLOW SCHEMATIC

The facility map and flow schematic are attached as provided by the discharger in the application.



