

Water regulators demand permits for coastal fireworks

By Tony Barboza, Los Angeles Times

Water regulators have voted to require pollution permits for coastal fireworks displays in southern Orange County and San Diego County, in what they said was the first such regulation in the nation.

Operators of seaside fireworks shows from Laguna Beach to the U.S.-Mexico border will have to pay a \$1,500 annual fee, minimize the discharge of pollutants into the water and clean up shells, cardboard, fuses and other debris under the rules approved Wednesday by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The rules, which take effect in June, will largely affect displays along the coastline, but will also apply to fireworks over rivers, streams, reservoirs and lakes.

Officials said the policy is an attempt to protect bodies of water from pyrotechnic shows that scatter pollutants and trash. The metals and chemicals that produce explosive effects and bright colors can also contaminate water and become toxic to aquatic life

“The new requirements balance the importance of public displays of fireworks as part of our national and community celebrations and the need to prevent degradation of water and sediment quality from the fallout of firework combustion residue,” David W. Gibson, the water board’s executive officer, said in a news release.

Water board officials said it was the nation’s first comprehensive policy to regulate fireworks as a pollution source subject to the federal Clean Water Act.

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