Plain Language Summary

*The following summary is provided for this pending water quality permit application being reviewed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality as required by 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 39. The information provided in this summary may change during the technical review of the application and are not federal enforceable representations of the permit application.*

San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CN600132278) San Miguel lignite mine (RN100226539). The facility is located at 6200 Farm-to-Market Road 3387, Christine, in Atascosa and McMullen Counties, Texas 78012.

This application is for an amendment to the existing TPDES permit for the facility. Lignite mines are unique in that they typically have multiple ponds that receive stormwater runoff, mine depressurization water, and mine pit dewatering water, and as mining progresses within the leased property boundaries, more ponds and structures are periodically added. That is precisely the situation at the San Miguel lignite mine, where new mining areas X, Y, and Z are to be added, and these new mining areas will feature five new treatment ponds (X-1, X-2, Y-1, Z-1, and Z-2). There will be five future outfalls associated with these new treatment ponds: outfall 055, 056, 058, 059, and 060. In addition to the changes related to the new mining areas, there is a proposed revision to existing mining area 11H, with a proposed treatment pond O, with proposed outfall 057.

The existing TPDES permit for the San Miguel lignite mean features 40 treatment ponds along with 39 designated outfalls. As mining progresses, and as reclamation activities take place, there are inevitably changes to the layout and sizing of the network of ponds. All of the treatment ponds are authorized to discharge at an intermittent and flow variable rate, which is necessary since the ponds are designed to capture stormwater runoff from the mine area, and the volume of rainfall and ultimately stormwater runoff is highly variable. Effluent limitations include parameters of total suspended solids, dissolved iron, dissolved manganese, and pH for active mining area outfalls, and parameters of dissolved iron and pH for post-mining area outfalls. All of the effluent limitations are in accordance with Federal effluent limitation guidelines that are based on 40 CFR Part 434.

The wastewater treatment system is focused on the capture of stormwater runoff, mine depressurization water, and mine pit water. Ponds are the treatment method applied for these waste streams, and the construction details of these ponds are specified by the Texas Railroad Commission. Fundamentally, the ponds capture their intended water, and sedimentation of solids is allowed to take place. For the proposed new mining areas and associated ponds, there will be pond X-1 with outfall 055, pond X-2 with outfall 056, pond Y-1 with outfall 058, pond Z-1 with outfall 059, and pond Z-2 with outfall 060. In addition, there will be a new pond O with outfall 057.