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Hilmar Cheese Pays Massive Pollution Fine

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One of the world's largest cheese companies paid California water regulators a \$3-million fine for polluting water for years by illegally flushing wastewater from its plant.

The payment by Hilmar Cheese Co. is the largest fine ever paid to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, water officials said.

Most of the money will fund an environmental study into salts from food processing plants that taint groundwater. The board had sought a \$4-million fine after regulators said the company had violated state water laws for nearly 16 years.