

# Taloja effluent plant seeks SC stay on NGT order to deposit Rs 5 crore

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NAVI MUMBAI: The Taloja common effluent treatment plant (CETP) Co-operative Society Ltd has filed an appeal before the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the National Green Tribunal order directing it to deposit Rs 5 crore for the “ill effects on the environment” due to toxic effluent discharge.

Taloja, the most-polluting CETP in the state, has been categorized as a non-performing plant by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).

After hearing a petition by a Panvel corporator Arvind Mhatre seeking damages for the ecological damage, the principal bench of the Delhi NGT, in its April 11 order, had ordered the Taloja CETP Cooperative Society Ltd to deposit Rs 5 crore with the district magistrate within a month. The next

NGT hearing is scheduled on Friday.

Sources in the Taloja manufacturers’ association said if the SC did not provide relief, the association might consider filing an intervening petition before the NGT to be made party to Mhatre’s case. The industry units, meanwhile, have started collecting the deposit money.

In a related development, CETP administrator B D Ahire has initiated measures to better the CETP’s performance. The tribunal has directed the MPCB to monitor the CETP and ensure there’s compliance with green norms. The NGT has also directed the senior-most MPCB officer, a ‘responsible’ Taloja CETP officer, and a representative of the state environment department be

present at the next hearing.

Since the last 10 days, a technical committee of representatives of the CETP member units have been supervising the desludging of the main collection tank and transportation of the sludge to the Mumbai waste management system for treatment before disposal.

Rajendra Harkara, a committee member, said: “The discharge of treated toxic effluents is collected in the tank, but due to the sludge, the chemical component tends to increase. There’s a floating aerator that churns the water so that atmospheric oxygen oxidises the chemical to reduce the harmful chemical oxygen demand. The diffusers through which oxygen is supplied for bacterial culture in the tanks for further treatment of chemical have also been cleaned.”