Public Scoping Meetings

for

PROPOSED STATEWIDE
WATER CONTACT RECREATION
BACTERIA OBJECTIVES AMENDMENTS
TO WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLANS FOR INLAND
SURFACE WATERS, ENCLOSED BAYS AND
ESTUARIES AND
THE OCEAN WATERS OF CALIFORNIA
(Proposed Amendments)

January 28, 2015 – Sacramento
February 10, 2015 – Costa Mesa

Purpose of Scoping Meetings

* Introduce the process of developing a statewide bacterial objective for contact recreation waters (REC1) in fresh and ocean waters

* To seek input from public agencies and members of the public on the range of project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures.

History

Clean Water Act directs States (with U.S. EPA oversight) to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health and welfare

- State's standards must include:
  - Designated Uses
  - Water Quality Criteria (Objectives in CA)
  - Antidegradation Policy

History

Clean Water Act direct U.S. EPA to promulgate standards when it determines that a new or revised standard is needed.

* In 2012 U.S. EPA issued their new recommended Recreational Water Criteria for Bacteria (2012 RWQC)
* The 2012 RWQC recommendations are for use by the states and tribes in adopting water quality standards

Current status

* Most Regional Water Boards basin plans are not currently consistent with the 2012 RWQC
* The State Water Board staff is developing the Proposed Amendments to provide efficient and consistent implementation statewide

2012 Bacteria Criteria

The 2012 criteria document recommends:

* For Fresh Waters – E. coli and/or enterococci criteria with two sets of estimated illness rates
* For Marine Waters – Enterococci criteria with two sets of estimated illness rates
* Each criteria consists of a geometric mean limit and a Statistical Threshold Value not to be exceeded more than 10% of the time.

U.S. EPA's 2012 bacteria indicator criteria guidance for fresh and marine waters

Criteria Elements	Estimated Illness Rate (NGI): 36 per 1,000 primary contact recreators			Estimated Illness Rate (NGI): 32 per 1,000 primary contact recreators	
	Magnitude			Magnitude	
Indicator	GM (cfu/100 mL)	STV (cfu/100 mL)	OR	GM (cfu/100 mL)	STV (cfu/100 mL)
Enterococci – marine and fresh	35	130		30	110
OR					
E. coli - fresh	126	410		100	320

NGI = NEEAR GI illness, NEEAR = National Epidemiological and Environmental Assessment of Recreational Water
GM = geometric mean STV = statistical threshold value cfu = colony forming units mL = milliliters

Elements of Proposed Amendments

* 1 – Bacteria Indicators
* 2 – Level of Public Health Protection for Illness Rate
* 3 – Address Natural Sources
* 4 – High Flow Suspension of Objectives for Fresh Water
* 5 – Compliance Schedules and Interim Requirements
* 6 – Calculation of Effluent Limits for POTWs
* 7 – Mixing Zones for Point Sources
* 8 – Averaging Periods to Determine Compliance
* 9 – Effluent Monitoring and Reporting Frequency
* 10 – Analytical Methods to Measure Bacteria Indicators
* 11 – Allow for a Variance, Seasonal Suspension or Limited REC 1

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 1: Bacteria Indicators (Fresh Waters)

* Leave existing bacteria indicators in place.
* Use only enterococci as an indicator organism.
* **Use only E. coli as an indicator organism.**
* Use both E. coli and enterococci as indicator organisms.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 1: Bacteria Indicators (Marine Waters)

* Leave existing bacteria indicators in place.
* **Use enterococci as a sole indicator.**

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 2: Level of Public Health Protection for Illness Rate

* No action (status quo).
* Use the U.S. EPA's Estimated Illness rate of 36 per 1,000.
* **Use the U.S. EPA's Estimated Illness rate of 32 per 1,000.**
* Use an alternative Estimated Illness rate.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 3: Address Natural Sources of Bacteria Levels

* No action (status quo).
* **Allow a reference system/antidegradation approach or natural sources exclusion approach.**
* Prohibit the use of a reference system/antidegradation approach or natural sources exclusion approach.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 4: High Flow Suspension of Objectives for Fresh Waters

* No action (status quo).
* **Allow high flow suspension for non-engineered channels along with engineered flood control channels.**
* Affirmatively prohibit high flow suspension, but specifically provide that the Los Angeles Water Board, who already has a high flow suspension policy, may continue to use that policy.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 5: Compliance Schedules and Interim Requirements

* **No action (status quo).**

* Allow up to a ten-year compliance schedule to meet the new objectives for REC1 waters.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 6: Calculation of Effluent Limits for POTWs

* **No action – Allow Regional Water Boards to specify the permit limits based on CDPH* guidelines for total coliform.**

* Develop statewide guidance for calculating effluent limits based on effluent variability.

* Develop statewide guidance for applying the objective at the end of the pipe.

* CDPH = California Department of Public Health

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 7: Mixing Zones for Point Sources

* **No action (status quo).**
* Allow mixing zones in a small area near an outfall.
* Do not allow mixing zones.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 8: Averaging Periods to Determine Compliance

* No action (status quo).
* Specify the geometric mean as a rolling average.
* **Specify the appropriate averaging period.**

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 9: Effluent Monitoring and Reporting Frequency

* **No action (status quo).**
* Establish monitoring frequencies for all dischargers.
* Provide narrative guidance which can be used as guidelines to help establish monitoring frequencies in NPDES* permits.

* NPDES – National Pollutant Discharger Elimination System

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 10: Analytical Methods to Measure Bacteria Indicators

* **No action (status quo).**

* Specify analytical methods for receiving waters and various effluents.

Elements of Proposed Amendments

Element 11: Allow for a Variance, Seasonal Suspension or Limited REC1

* No Action(status quo).
* Encourage the designation of Limited REC1 waters where appropriate.
* **Allow the use of a variance, seasonal suspension or Limited REC1.**

Purpose of Scoping Meeting

* To obtain input on:
  * A range of project actions, alternatives
  * Reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance
  * Significant impacts to be analyzed
  * Cumulative impacts, if any
  * Mitigation measures

Environmental Checklist

Evaluate possible environmental impacts on the following categories

* Aesthetics
* Agriculture & Forest Resources
* Air Quality
* Biological Resources
* Cultural Resources
* Geology & Soils
* Greenhouse Gas Emissions
* Hazards & Hazardous Materials
* Hydrology & Water Quality
* Land Use & Planning
* Mineral Resources
* Noise
* Population & Housing
* Public Services
* Recreation
* Transportation/Traffic
* Utilities & Sewer Services

Comments

* Written comments will be accepted until Noon on February 20, 2015
* Addressed to:

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board

State Water Resources Control Board

1001 I Street, 24th Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814

Comments

* Comments letters may be submitted by email to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov
* Must be less than 15 megabytes in total size
* Or by fax at (916) 341-5620
* Note in subject line "Comment Letter – Statewide Bacteria Objectives – Scoping Comments"

Timeline

Initial Focus Group Outreach – April 2014 – July 2014

Scoping Document & Meeting – January/February 2015

Draft Staff Report – Summer 2015

Public Comment – Summer 2015

Public Hearing – Fall 2015

Comment Response - Winter 2015

Board Adoption – Spring 2016

Website

State Water Board website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/bacterialobjectives/

U.S.EPA 2012 criteria and other information:

http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/criteria/health/recreation/

Contacts

* Marine Waters
  * Michael Gjerde – Michael.Gjerde@waterboards.ca.gov
* Fresh Waters
  * Stephanie Rose – Stephanie.Rose@waterboards.ca.gov