

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – LOS ANGELES REGIONAL WATER BOARD
DECEMBER 1, 2015**

ITEM 2

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT INCORPORATING STAKEHOLDER-DEVELOPED GROUNDWATER QUALITY MEASURES FOR SALTS AND NUTRIENTS IN THE LOWER SANTA CLARA RIVER GROUNDWATER BASINS INTO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION

DISCUSSION

On July 9, 2015 the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Water Board) adopted [Resolution No. R15-007](#). This Basin Plan amendment incorporates stakeholder-developed groundwater quality management measures for the Lower Santa Clara River Groundwater Basin of Ventura County into the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan). These groundwater quality management measures were developed by stakeholders as part of the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan for the Lower Santa Clara River Basin. Such plans are a requirement of State Water Board's Recycled Water Policy and are intended to maintain the beneficial uses of groundwater while increasing recycled water use throughout the state.

Background

In keeping with the goal of increasing sustainable local water supplies throughout the state, the State Water Board adopted a Recycled Water Policy (Policy) in 2009 to increase the beneficial use of recycled water from municipal wastewater sources in a manner that implements state and federal water quality laws. This Policy recognizes the potential for increased salt and nutrient loads to groundwater basins with increasing recycled water use, and therefore requires the management of these parameters on a basin-wide scale – through the development of Salt and Nutrient Management Plans (SNMPs) for every basin/sub-basin in the state. These SNMPs are to be funded and developed by local water and wastewater entities, together with local salt/nutrient contributing stakeholders with participation by Regional Water Board staff.

Salt and Nutrient Management Measures for the Lower Santa Clara River Basin

The Lower Santa Clara River Basin is located in the southwestern portion of Ventura County and consists of the Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Mound and Oxnard Forebay sub-basins. These sub-basins are overlain by the cities of Fillmore, Santa Paula, and San Buenaventura (Ventura) and small, unincorporated communities in Ventura County. Most of the area is reliant on groundwater for 65% of their overall water supply.

The Lower Santa Clara River Basin is actively managed by the United Water Conservation District through groundwater replenishment and the construction and operation of water supply and delivery systems, and by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District through the issuance of permits for water supply and monitoring wells, and the collection of groundwater quality data. Recycled water use is not yet fully developed within this area; however, plans exist to expand its current use through a number of recycled water projects.

Sources of water and salts and nutrients to the basin include percolation of stream flows, imported water, recycled water, wastewater treatment percolation pond effluent, septic systems, and groundwater from upgradient basins. While there are localized areas with higher salt and nutrient levels (particularly in the vicinity of wastewater treatment effluent percolation ponds), average water quality in most of the sub-basins is below Basin Plan objectives, except for the Mound sub-basin where the existing concentration of TDS exceeds the water quality objective.

Stakeholders and interested persons for the Lower Santa Clara River Basin collaborated to develop the SNMP for their basin. The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) was the lead agency for the planning effort. A tiered stakeholder process, which included a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee (SCRWC), and the Regional Water Board, allowed for broad-based local community involvement. The TAG was made up of the funding agencies and stakeholders responsible for management of salts and nutrients in the watershed and includes VCWPD, the cities of Ventura, Santa Paula and Fillmore, the United Water Conservation District (UWCD), Ventura County Water Works District 16, and the Farm Bureau of Ventura County.

The SNMP contains all applicable elements prescribed by the Recycled Water Policy: (i) Source identification/source loading and assimilative capacity estimates; (ii) Implementation measures; (iii) Consideration of water recycling/stormwater recharge/use; (iv) Anti-degradation analyses; and (v) Development of a basin-wide monitoring plan.

The proposed management strategies for salt and nutrients are designed to maintain current water quality conditions in the groundwater basins, prevent additional loading in localized areas with elevated levels of salts and nutrients in localized areas, and manage additional loads from future recycled water projects in a manner that is protective of beneficial uses. The CEQA analysis conducted for the management measures outlined in the SNMP resulted in a finding of less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated.

These salt and nutrient management measures are contained in Chapter 8 “Groundwater Quality Management – Sustainability and Basin-specific Protection of Groundwater” of the Basin Plan

POLICY ISSUE

Should the State Water Board approve the amendment to the Basin Plan to incorporate groundwater quality management measures for salts and nutrients in the Lower Santa Clara River groundwater basins into the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region as adopted by Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. R15-007?

FISCAL IMPACT

Los Angeles Water Board and State Water Board staff work associated with or resulting from this action will be addressed with existing and future budgeted resources.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

Approval of Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. R15-007 will amend the Los Angeles Water Board’s Basin Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the State Water Board:

1. Approve the Basin Plan amendments adopted under Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. No. R15-007.
2. Authorize and direct the Executive Director or designee to submit the Basin Plan amendments adopted under Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. R15-007 to the OAL for approval.

State Water Board action on this item will assist the Water Boards in reaching Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan Update: 2008-2012 to comprehensively address water quality protection and restoration, and the relationship between water supply and water quality ...throughout California’s water planning process.

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STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2015-

APPROVING AN AMENDMENT INCORPORATING STAKEHOLDER-DEVELOPED GROUNDWATER QUALITY MEASURES FOR SALTS AND NUTRIENTS IN THE LOWER SANTA CLARA RIVER GROUNDWATER BASINS INTO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION

WHEREAS:

1. On July 9, 2015 the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Los Angeles Region (Los Angeles Water Board) adopted [Resolution No. R15-007](#). This amendment incorporates stakeholder-developed groundwater quality management measures for salts and nutrients in the Lower Santa Clara River groundwater basins into the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan). These groundwater quality management measures were developed by stakeholders as part of the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan for the Lower Santa Clara River Basins in Ventura County. Such plans are a requirement of the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board's) Recycled Water Policy and are intended to maintain the beneficial uses of groundwater while increasing recycled water use throughout the state.
2. The Los Angeles Water Board found that the analysis contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) "Substitute Environmental Documents" for the proposed Basin Plan amendment, including the CEQA Checklist, the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan, and the Staff Memorandum for this amendment, complies with the requirements of the State Water Board's certified regulatory process, as set forth in the California Code of Regulations, Title 23, section 3775 et seq. The State Water Board has reviewed the Substitute Environmental Documents for the Basin Plan amendment and concurs with the Los Angeles Water Board's findings and determinations, including the Statement of Overriding Considerations.
3. This Basin Plan amendment meets the "necessity" standard of the California Administrative Procedures Act, Government Code section 11353(b), because the Recycled Water Policy requires that Regional Water Boards incorporate salt and nutrient management measures for groundwater basins into their respective basin plans within one year of the receipt of stakeholder developed salt and nutrient management plans. Also, Water Code section 13240 requires each regional water board's basin plan to conform with any State policy for water quality control.
4. The proposed management strategies for salt and nutrients are designed to maintain current water quality conditions in the groundwater basins, prevent additional loading in localized areas with elevated levels of salts and nutrients, and manage additional loads from future recycled water projects in a manner that is protective of beneficial uses. Therefore, the amendment is consistent with State Water Board [Resolution No. 68-16](#), and is also consistent with the policy of the State, established in California Water Code section 106.3 that everyone has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water.

D R A F T

5. This Basin Plan amendment does not become effective until approved by the State Water Board and the Office of Administrative Law (OAL).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The State Water Board:

1. Approves the Basin Plan amendment adopted under Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. R015-007.
2. Authorizes and directs the Executive Director or designee to submit the Basin Plan amendment adopted under Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. R15-007 to OAL for approval.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned Clerk to the Board does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Resources Control Board held on December 1, 2015.

Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board