



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OCT 13 2015

RECEIVED

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State of California
Central Coast Water Board

Kenneth A. Harris, Jr.
Executive Officer
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Coast Region
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, California 93401-7906

Dear Mr. Harris:

Thank you for submitting the complete Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) Basin Plan Amendment (BPA) for the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for nitrogen compounds and orthophosphate compounds in the Lower Salinas River watershed, Reclamation Canal Basin, and Moro Cojo Slough subwatershed, on June 9, 2014, for approval by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We find that all the federal required elements are adequately addressed, and we approve the TMDLs pursuant to CWA section 303(d)(2). The TMDLs, upon complete implementation, will result in attainment of the applicable water quality standards for nitrate, unionized ammonia, total nitrogen and orthophosphate for all waterbodies in the Lower Salinas River watershed, Reclamation Canal Basin, and Moro Cojo Slough subwatershed. These TMDLs will also address impairments for low dissolved oxygen, biostimulatory substances, microcystins, and chlorophyll-*a*.

The Regional Board, State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), and Office of Administrative Law (OAL) took action on the BPA on the following dates:

- Regional Board adoption on March 14, 2013 (Resolution No. R3-2013-0008)
- State Board adoption on February 4, 2014 (Resolution No. 2014-0008)
- OAL approval on May 7, 2014 (2014-0325-01S)
- Regional Board signed submittal letter, dated June 9, 2014, to EPA requesting approval of the TMDLs

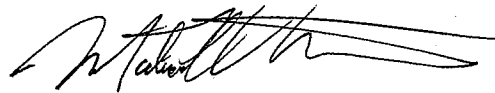
The State has provided adequate opportunities for public review and comment on the TMDLs and demonstrated how public comments were considered in the final TMDL. By including TMDLs for waterbodies that are not currently impaired as well as for those that are impaired, the TMDLs and allocations appropriately use an antidegradation approach to develop numeric targets, load allocations and waste load allocations to protect beneficial uses in the waters identified. The TMDLs appropriately consider seasonal variation and critical conditions, and provide an adequate margin of safety.

The TMDL submittal contains the State's implementation strategy and schedule. Implementation of the TMDLs is a critical next step to realize improvements in water quality in the watershed. While EPA is not taking action on the implementation strategy specifically, as we are not required by section 303(d) or its implementing regulations to approve or disapprove implementation plans submitted with TMDLs, we support the State's proposed implementation approaches to protect and restore water quality, including use of regulatory authorities. We encourage the Regional Board to continue its work with stakeholders

to implement these strategies consistent with California's Nonpoint Source Management Plan as approved by EPA under the Clean Water Act Section 319, when appropriate. We remain available to provide support where possible to assist both the regulated community and the Regional Board in fostering ongoing watershed stewardship to achieve the TMDLs.

If you have any questions concerning this approval, please call me at (415) 972-3438, or Terry Fleming at (415) 972-3462.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Montgomery", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Montgomery
Acting Director, Water Division

cc: Rik Rasmussen, SWRCB
Jennifer Epp, CCRWQCB
Peter Osmolovsky, CCRWQCB