

"Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region
To Incorporate a Septic System Prohibition in the Oxnard Forebay"

Septic Systems

The California Water Code, Chapter 4, Article 5, sets forth criteria for regulating individual disposal systems (i.e., residential septic tanks). Prior to the 1950s, the Regional Board placed certain types of septic tank systems under individual WDRs. In the 1950s, the Regional Board delegated local health or public works departments jurisdiction to permit and regulate septic tank disposal systems, typically for single-family dwellings. However, the Regional Board could exercise jurisdiction over multiple-dwelling units, some non-domestic septic tank systems, and large developments in certain problem areas, as well as in any situation where septic systems are creating or have the potential to create a water quality problem.

On August 12, 1999, the Regional Board amended the Basin Plan to include a prohibition on septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay (Figure 4-2a), pursuant to Section 13280 of the California Water Code. The prohibition applies to both future and existing septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay. As of August 12, 1999, new septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay were prohibited. By January 1, 2008, discharges from existing septic systems must cease. This action was taken in view of:

- The conclusion that discharges of wastewaters from residential and commercial facilities to groundwater underlying the Oxnard Forebay do not meet water quality objectives specified in the Basin Plan, and are impairing the present and future beneficial uses of underlying resources of ground water.
- The need to ensure long-term protection of ground water underlying both the Oxnard Forebay and the Oxnard Plain. Alternatives to replace these supplies of local water, or to treat the water before beneficial use, would be costly and would violate the requirement to protect the water for beneficial uses.

The prohibition is not intended to prevent repairs to existing septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay prior to January 1, 2008, provided that the purpose of such repairs is not to increase capacity.

An exemption to this prohibition or a time extension of the effective date of the prohibition may be granted in the event the Regional Board determines that such an exemption or extension is in the best interest of water quality, in accordance with Water Code Section 13241 and the correction of water quality problems associated with the wastewater discharges from septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay.

Individual disposal systems that dispose of domestic wastewater that are located on lot sizes equal to or greater than five acres are not subject to this prohibition.

In other areas, where ground water constitutes an important source of drinking water, the Regional Board has adopted general WDRs (Order 91-94) for certain private residential subsurface sewage disposal systems. A lot with a size less than 1 acre is not eligible for these general WDRs; for those lots between one and less than five acres in size, the General WDRs require either a hydrogeologic study or mitigation measures. WDRs are not required for lot sizes greater than five acres.

