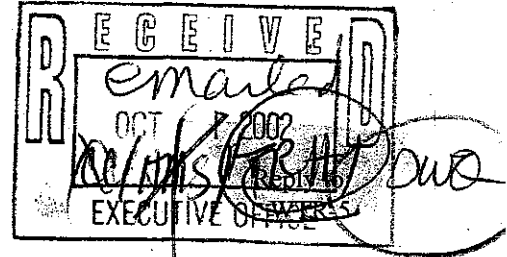




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

RAH  
HPL #017



SEP 25 2002

Celeste Cantú, Executive Director  
California State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

DWQ Received  
Division Chief's Office

OCT 07 2002

Dear Ms. Cantú:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed an amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan, Los Angeles Region* (Basin Plan) for the coastal watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura County which updates bacteria objectives for water bodies designated for Water Contact Recreation (REC-1). This amendment was adopted by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) on October 25, 2001 (Regional Board Resolution No. 01-018), and approved by the State Water Resources Control Board and State Office of Administrative Law on July 18, 2002 and September 19, 2002, respectively. Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires EPA to approve or disapprove new or revised state-adopted water quality standards. In today's action, we approve in whole the 2001 amendment to Chapter 3, *Water Quality Objectives*, of the Basin Plan. Our action is further detailed below.

**ESA Consultation with the Services on EPA's Action**

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act states that each federal agency shall ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any federally listed endangered or threatened species. Because the 2001 amendment is a human health objective expressly designed to protect swimmers from gastrointestinal illnesses, EPA has determined that its approval action today will have no effect on any listed species.

**Scope of EPA's Approval**

The following paragraphs set forth in whole the scope of our approval of the 2001 amendment to the Basin Plan. These paragraphs entirely replace paragraph two under the objective for "Bacteria, Coliform" in Chapter 3 of the 1994 update to the Basin Plan<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> *Italics added to indicate 304(a) criteria guidance for indicator bacteria recommended in Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria - 1986 (EPA 440/5-84-002, January 1986).*

## **"In Marine Waters Designated for Water Contact Recreation (REC-1)**

### Geometric Mean Limits

Total coliform density shall not exceed 1,000/100 ml.

Fecal coliform density shall not exceed 200/100 ml.

*Enterococcus* density shall not exceed 35/100 ml.

### Single Sample Limits

Total coliform density shall not exceed 10,000/100 ml.

Fecal coliform density shall not exceed 400/100 ml.

*Enterococcus* density shall not exceed 104/100 ml.

Total coliform density shall not exceed 1,000/100 ml, if the ratio of fecal-to-total coliform exceeds 0.1.

## **In Fresh Waters Designated for Water Contact Recreation (REC-1)**

### Geometric Mean Limits

*E. coli* density shall not exceed 126/100 ml.

Fecal coliform density shall not exceed 200/100 ml.

### Single Sample Limits

*E. coli* density shall not exceed 235/100 ml.

Fecal coliform density shall not exceed 400/100 ml.

## **Implementation Provisions for Water Contact Recreation Bacteria Objectives**

The geometric mean values should be calculated based on a statistically sufficient number of samples (generally not less than 5 samples equally spaced over a 30-day period).

If any of the single sample limits are exceeded, the Regional Board may require repeat sampling on a daily basis until the sample falls below the single sample limit in order to determine the persistence of the exceedance.


When repeat sampling is required because of an exceedance of any one single sample limit, values from all samples collected during that 30-day period will be used to calculate the geometric mean."

In 1986, EPA published 304(a) criteria guidance recommending use of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) and enterococci as indicator bacteria (see *Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria - 1986*, EPA 440/5-84-002, January 1986). The epidemiological data upon which the criteria guidance are based indicate that *E. coli* and enterococci are better correlated to health effects related to water-contact recreation. EPA's *Action Plan for Beaches and Recreational Waters* (EPA/600/R-98/079, March 1999) calls for all states to adopt bacterial standards that are consistent with current criteria guidance by 2003. In 1999, as directed by Assembly Bill 411

(1997), the California Department of Health Services adopted regulations establishing minimum protective bacterial standards for waters adjacent to beaches which include standards for total coliform, fecal coliform, and enterococci bacteria, and fecal-to-total coliform ratio. The 2001 amendment to Chapter 3 of the Basin Plan is consistent with our recommended criteria guidance for bacterial objectives and State requirements for bacterial standards for waters adjacent to beaches. Pursuant to Section 303(c) of the CWA and implementing federal regulations at 40 CFR 131, we hereby approve the water quality objectives contained in the 2001 amendment to the Basin Plan.

If there are any questions regarding our action, please contact Robyn Stuber, of my staff, at (415) 972-3524. As always, we look forward to continued cooperation with the State in achieving our mutual environmental goals.

Sincerely,

  
Alexis Strauss *25 Sept. 2002*  
Director, Water Division

cc: Dennis Dickerson, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Stan Martinson, State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality  
Susan A. Warner, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Loretta K. Barsamian, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Roger W. Briggs, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Gary M. Carlton, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Loren J. Harlow, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Fresno Office  
James C. Pedri, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Redding Office  
Thomas R. Pinkos, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Sacramento Office  
Harold J. Singer, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Phil Gruenberg, Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Gerard J. Thibeault, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board  
John Robertus, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Diane Noda, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Office  
Jim Bartel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Carlsbad Office  
James Lecky, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Region  
Brian Thompson, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water (4305)