

State of California
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-003
March 9, 2006

**Basin Plan Amendment to Incorporate a Variance Provision for the Groundwater Mineral
Quality Objectives from Coastal Groundwater Areas with High Concentrations of
Naturally Occurring Minerals**

WHEREAS, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region, finds that:

1. In 1988, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) adopted Resolution 88-63, the Sources of Drinking Water Policy (SODW Policy). This statewide policy mandated that all surface and ground waters of the State are to be considered suitable, or potentially suitable, for municipal or domestic water supply and that all waters should be so designated by the Regional Boards, with certain exceptions.
2. In 1989, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) adopted Resolution 89-03, amending the Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region per the directive in State Board Resolution 88-63.
3. Currently all ground waters, with the exception of the two areas, are designated as either 'existing' or 'potential' MUN in the Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region. [These MUN use designations of all ground waters pre-date the incorporation of the SODW Policy in the Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region in 1989.]
4. The current Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region contains mineral water quality objectives for TDS, sulfate, chloride and boron in ground waters.
5. Some of the exceptions identified in the SODW Policy that could be applied to water bodies include surface and ground waters where:
 - a. The total dissolved solids (TDS) exceed 3,000 mg/L (5,000 μ S/cm, electrical conductivity) and it is not reasonably expected by Regional Boards to supply a public water system, or
 - b. There is contamination, either by natural processes or by human activity (unrelated to the specific pollution incident), that cannot reasonably be treated for domestic use using either best management practices or best economically achievable treatment practices, or
 - c. The water source does not provide sufficient water to supply a single well capable of producing an average, sustained yield of 200 gallons per day.
6. In 1998, the Regional Board adopted amendments to the Basin Plan that de-designated the MUN beneficial use from portions of two groundwater basins that lay seaward of established groundwater injection barriers designed to prevent further seawater intrusion in the basin (Regional Board Resolution No. 98-18).
7. From 2000 to 2004, Regional Board staff has received four additional requests to consider removing the MUN beneficial use from other groundwater areas on the basis of exceptions

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permitted in the SODW Policy. In particular, the following exception was invoked: waters of the State where total dissolved solids (TDS) exceed 3,000 mg/L and it is not reasonably expected by Regional Boards to supply a public water system (State Board Resolution No. 88-63, exception 1.a.). Staff anticipates that similar requests will continue to be made by various stakeholders.

8. In the process of evaluating these 4 additional requests for de-designation, it has become apparent to staff and management that we need to develop a consistent, regional framework for addressing these groundwater issues.

9. Regional Board staff recommends adoption of a Basin Plan amendment to allow a variance from the mineral quality objectives for groundwater basins when specified criteria are met. If adopted, the Regional Board would have the authority to grant a variance to a discharger(s) from mineral quality objectives (contained in Table 3-10 of the 1994 Basin Plan). This authority would be limited in geographic scope to coastal aquifers in situations where elevated concentrations of minerals are caused by natural sources due to an aquifer's proximity to the coast, including seawater intrusion, presence of marine sediments or tidal fluctuations.

10. It is not the Regional Board's intent in adopting this amendment to provide relief from the groundwater mineral quality objectives to a discharger that is causing or significantly contributing to saltwater intrusion as a result of groundwater overdraft.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that

1. Some of the groundwater areas at issue have poor mineral quality (i.e. high concentrations of total dissolved solids) and exceed the SODW Policy threshold of 3,000 mg/L of TDS as described in #6 above. However, it is not unreasonable, given the regional demand for water supplies, periodic water shortages, controversy over imported water supplies, and current desalinization technology, to anticipate that the ground waters proposed for de-designation may be used as water supplies at some future time.
2. Pursuant to sections 13240, 13241, and 13242 of the California Water Code, the Regional Board, after considering the entire record, including oral testimony at the hearing, hereby adopts the amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region, to incorporate a variance provision for the mineral quality objectives for groundwater per the variance provisions contained in Attachment A.
3. The Executive Officer is directed to forward copies of the Basin Plan amendment to the State Board in accordance with the requirements of section 13245 of the California Water Code.
4. The Regional Board requests that the State Board approve the Basin Plan amendment in accordance with the requirements of sections 13245 and 13246 of the California Water Code and forward it to OAL and the U.S. EPA.
5. If during its approval process Regional Board staff, the State Board or OAL determines that minor, non-substantive corrections to the language of the amendment are needed for clarity or consistency, the Executive Officer may make such changes, and shall inform the Board of any such changes.
6. The Executive Officer is authorized to sign a Certificate of Fee Exemption.

I, Jonathan Bishop, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region, on March 9, 2006.


Jonathan S. Bishop
Interim Executive Officer

5/22/06
Date