

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN DIEGO REGION**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
JUNE 10, 2020**

**ITEM 5**

**SUBJECT**

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Statewide Investigations Update (*Sarah Mearon*)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Informational item only; no recommendation.

**KEY ISSUE**

PFAS are a family of more than 3,000 chemicals that are persistent in the environment and are very mobile in water. PFAS accumulates in groundwater and exposure to these chemicals via drinking water is an increasing concern. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) began issuing investigative orders in March 2019 directing various entities across the State to provide data regarding the presence of PFAS in the environment associated with their respective commercial or industrial operations.

**PRACTICAL VISION**

Chapter 4 of the San Diego Water Board Practical Vision, *Proactive Public Outreach and Communication* is focused on implementing the core values of leadership, communication and transparency. This item provides an opportunity for the San Diego Regional Board and the public to learn about the State Water Board's efforts to collect information regarding PFAS that will be used to protect and restore water quality in the interest of providing a sustainable water supply.

**DISCUSSION**

PFAS is a family of more than 3,000 man-made and generally unregulated chemicals that have been produced since mid-century for the manufacture of a wide range of industrial and household products. They are mobile, persistent, and bioaccumulative. PFAS are resistant to degradation in the environment and, when degradation occurs, it often results in the formation of other PFAS compounds. The PFAS classes of concern in the State Water Board investigative orders are perfluoroalkyl sulfonic acids such as the long-chain perfluorooctanesulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

PFAS are found in a wide variety of consumer products, as well as fire-fighting foams known as aqueous film-forming foams or AFFF. Potential firefighting sources of PFAS include airports and aviation facilities, military bases and training centers, petroleum refineries and terminals, and petrochemical production facilities. Non-industrial PFAS sources include waste disposal facilities, wastewater treatment plant operations, and biosolids application to agriculture. Secondary sources of PFAS include waste streams such as landfills and wastewater treatment plants. Based on this, the State Water Board issued investigative orders to landfills and airports across the state. PFAS in the form of PFOS have historically been used in fume suppressants in chrome plating operations. Accordingly, the State Water Board issued investigative orders to active chrome platers in

October 2019. Additional investigative orders are anticipated to be issued to wastewater treatment plants and petroleum refineries and terminals later in 2020, with additional industries targeted thereafter. The State Water Board is also working with the Department of Defense to investigate sources of PFAS at military installation facilities throughout California.

The PFAS screening investigations are part of a statewide effort to evaluate PFAS groundwater and surface water impacts and obtain a preliminary understanding of PFAS concentrations at facilities. State Water Board and Regional Water Board staff will review the PFAS data collected during the investigations and make informed decisions regarding the implementation of appropriate regulatory action, in anticipation of emerging regulatory standards for PFAS.

**LEGAL CONCERNS**

None.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The agenda notice for today's meeting was posted on the San Diego Water Board's website and sent to subscribers to the email list for Board meetings. This satisfies the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requirements to publish the meeting notice and agenda.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

None.