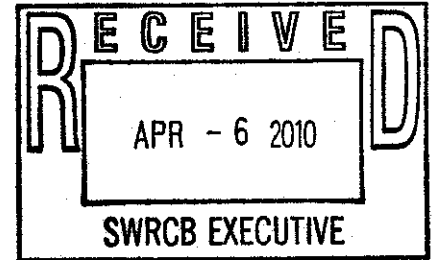


From: Matthew Boruta <borutam@yahoo.com>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 4/6/2010 7:33 PM
Subject: Protect Marine Life by Eliminating Once Through Cooling



Dear Chair Hoppin and State Board Members,

Dear Chair Hoppin and State Board Members:

Power plants using ?once-through cooling? (OTC) are currently allowed to withdraw more than 16 billion gallons of ocean and Delta water every day, killing aquatic life from all levels of the food chain. Larvae and small fish get sucked into the plants and die in the turbines. Larger fish (including the endangered Chinook salmon), turtles, and marine mammals get trapped by the force of the rushing water and die on the intake screens. All told, an estimated 79 billion fish and other marine life are killed every year by OTC.

The Clean Water Act called for the phase-out of this destructive practice almost four decades ago. We appreciate your past efforts to develop a state policy that would protect California?s ecosystems from OTC. However, the recent, major changes to the latest draft of the OTC policy meet neither the letter nor the intent of the Clean Water Act to phase out these antiquated, inefficient, environmentally harmful cooling systems.

I urge the State Water Board to reject recently-proposed OTC policy amendments that move the state away from a path to phase out once-through cooling systems. The OTC policy needs to be strengthened significantly to reinforce the state?s commitment to ensuring that these facilities adopt the ?best technology available? based on swift, certain timeframes.

Prior, stronger versions of the policy were described by the state?s top three power agencies as providing a ?workable schedule? that ?maintain[s] reliable operation of the electric grid.? The electrical grid oversight agency itself found that many older power plants also have ?higher greenhouse gas emission rates and other pollutants than new generation sources.? Once-through cooling enables inefficient power plants to operate at the expense of the environment and undermines state goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

California has invested significant attention and dollars to restoring and maintaining our marine, coastal and Delta habitats. A protective OTC policy that meets the letter and intent of the law is essential to maintain these ongoing investments in healthy ecosystems. Please reject proposed amendments that move us backwards from this goal.

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