



April 8, 2015

Via Email

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Subject: Comment Letter – Desalination Amendment (Ocean Plan)

We thank the Board for the opportunity to submit comments on the Proposed Final Amendment to the Ocean Plan for desalination facilities. We compliment staff for their excellent work on this important amendment.

We offer two comments:

1. L.2.b (7) page 5: Applicability and General Provisions, Site: Requires brine disposal siting at sufficient distances from MPA/SWQPA areas so that there are “no impacts” on the MPA or SWQPA. Suggest this be modified to read “no discernible impacts” as “no impacts” is an absolute and can’t be achieved.
2. L.4 Monitoring page 21: definition for Natural Salinity. The Expert Panel recommended an “... incremental salinity limit at the mixing zone boundary of no more than 5% of that occurring naturally... a percentage increase allows for natural variability in the background waters...” We request that the definition be modified to read “... ocean salinity from a representative area that is not under the influence of brine discharge and storm flows...” Compliance for brine discharge should be allowed above the natural ocean variability as recommended by the Expert Panel. Ocean salinity may exceed the long-term mean by 2 to 3 percent (670 to 1,000 mg/l) in El Nino years. As proposed the allowance of 2,000 mg/l from the long-term mean would reduce by up to 50% the discharge allowance in El Nino years, making compliance difficult or not achievable in certain cases. We recommend that the Regional Board’s apply this receiving water limitation as a technology based effluent limitation. This should be addressed in the staff report. This approach reduces burdensome and unnecessary compliance salinity monitoring, saving public funds.

If you should have any questions or need to further discuss our comments, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (714) 593-5003 or by email at rbell@mwdoc.com. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Bell, PE
Manager, Water Resources and Facility Planning

cc: R. Davis, CalDesal