



Wastewater Treatment



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October 18, 2006
Song Her, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Comment Letter - 2006 Federal CWA Section 303(d) List

Dear Ms. Her:

Board of Directors
Representing:

- County of Sacramento
- County of Yolo
- City of Citrus Heights
- City of Elk Grove
- City of Folsom
- City of Rancho Cordova
- City of Sacramento
- City of West Sacramento

- Mary K. Snyder
District Engineer
- Stan R. Dean
Plant Manager
- Wendell H. Kido
District Manager
- Marcia Maurer
Chief Financial Officer

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCS D) appreciates the opportunity to provide written comments both on the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board) September 2006 Staff Report regarding preparation of the 2006 303(d) List, and on the September 15, 2006 List itself. SRCS D is a regional sanitation district that serves over a million customers in the Sacramento metropolitan area and owns and operates the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP). The SRWTP discharges directly into the Sacramento River downstream of Freeport, which in this revision of the 303(d) list is now part of a new water quality limited segment titled the Delta Waterways (northern portion), in Region 5.

We commend the State Water Board staff again for the obvious effort that has gone into the documentation for the proposed 2006 listings, and the preparation of the September 2006 update of the Staff Report titled, *Revision of the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Water Quality Segments*. The Staff Report continues to contain a much more detailed description and analysis of the basis and information used for listing recommendations than past processes. However, SRCS D has found five items that are incorrect in the Staff Report and is continuing to propose two additional revisions. These recommended revisions in the Staff Report would result in not adding DDT and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) to the September 15, 2006 Proposed 2006 List in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality segment of the Central Valley, Region 5. Our specific comments to various portions of the Listing Document are outlined below, which we believe must be addressed to ensure clarity, consistency and the use of sound science.

CORRECTIONS AND PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE 2006 303(d) LIST

Two of the five corrections are for not completely addressing two of SRCS D's comments made in our January 31, 2006 comment letter that is enclosed for your review. The other three corrections are related to use of new Delta Waterway mapping areas. The two recommended revisions are for requested changes in response to the two comments that were not completely addressed.

The sequence of our comments below follows the order of the Staff Report and the resulting 2006 Section 303(d) List. However, because Volumes II, III and IV of the Staff Report serve as the foundation for Volume I, we have addressed items in the foundation volumes prior to Volume I. Similarly, because the 2006 List itself is the result of all work in the various volumes of the Staff Report, we have addressed that last in our comments (not because it is least important).

Corrections

In the Staff Report, Volume IV (Responses to Comments) SRCSD's comments numbers 1, 2, and 5 were correctly placed, but comments 3 and 4 were not. Comment 1 (page 19) is with the set of comments on Staff Report Volume 1, while comments 2 and 5 are on page 114 with the Central Valley Region Fact Sheets. However, comments 3 and 4 were mistakenly placed with the Santa Ana Region Fact Sheet comments on page 134. Apparently the two comments were placed there because the first part of each comment argues against using OEHHA screening values for fish tissue pollutant concentrations. However, each of the two comments has five parts, and the other four parts present arguments about the data used for DDT and PCB evaluations, and other information about the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality segment in Region 5. This error should be corrected by placing a complete answer to all five parts of these two comments, with our comments 2 and 5 on page 114 of the Central Valley Region Fact Sheet comments. Specifically, the contents of SRCSD's comments that were omitted from page 114 of Volume IV, requested that the SWRCB consider:

3. Not adding DDT as a pollutant in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality limited segment.
4. Not adding polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) as a pollutant in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality limited segment.

In the Staff Report, Volume III (Water Body Fact Sheets Supporting the Listing and Delisting Recommendations), for the Central Valley (Region 5), in the section of that document labeled Area Change Recommendations, descriptions are correctly made that place SRCSD in the Delta Waterways (northern portion), one of eight currently defined Delta segments. However, the section of that same document labeled List as Being Addressed Recommendations for the Delta only includes the 2002 set of three Delta waterways (pages 89 to 95). This list should be corrected to expand it to include all eight Delta Waterways and should also include Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon in the Delta Waterways (northern portion), since that TMDL was completed for the entire Delta in June 2006.

In the Staff Report, Volume I, Table 8 (Additions to the List Being Addressed), should be corrected on page 44 to expand it to include all eight new Delta Waterways in Region 5, including the northern portion, for Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon, as was done for the old 2002 3-Delta-waterways definitions.

Also in the Staff Report, Volume I, Table 11 (Schedule) should be corrected on page 85 to include the Delta Waterways (northern portion), and all other new Delta Waterway descriptions in Region 5, in this case for work on mercury, and not just the three old Delta designations of the Stockton Ship Channel, the eastern portion and the western portion.

All of the above corrections should be incorporated in the revised 2006 Section 303(d) List itself for the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality limited segment.

Proposed Revisions

In the Staff Report, Volume III (Water Body Fact Sheets Supporting the Listing and Delisting Recommendations) for the Central Valley (Region 5), SRCSD's two comments (3 and 4) that were misplaced in Volume IV should be considered completely.. We would request again, that both DDT and PCBs not be added to the 2006 list, in the Delta Waterways (northern portion), for the multiple reasons stated in our January 31, 2006 letter.

In the Staff Report, Volume I, Table 7 (Additions to the List) should be revised on page 27 to delete DDT and PCBs from the Delta Waterways (northern portion) of Region 5 as a result of the changes in Volume III above, again based on the multiple reasons listed in our letter of January 31, 2006.

As a result of the revisions requested above, the 2006 Section 303(d) List should also be revised by not adding DDT and PCBs to the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality limited segment.

Song Her, Clerk to the Board
October 18, 2006
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Conclusion

In summary, SRCSD has reviewed the State Water Board September 2006 Staff Report and the September 15, 2006 proposed 2006 CWA Section 303(d) List. SRCSD appreciates the opportunity to review these documents and requests that the SWRCB make changes in the proposed 303(d) list as specifically stated above to improve the documents clarity, consistency and the use of sound science. Our staff is available to discuss these corrections and requested changes in greater detail at the convenience of State Water Board staff.

Sincerely,



Wendell H. Kido
District Manager

Enclosure (1)

MKS/TM:mf

cc: Mary Snyder, SRCSD
Terrie Mitchell, SRCSD
Craig Wilson, State Water Resources Control Board
Dorena Goding, State Water Resources Control Board



January 31, 2006

TECHNOLOGY IN BALANCE WITH NATURE

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Craig J. Wilson, Chief
Water Quality Assessment Unit
Division of Water Quality
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, California 95812-0100

Subject: *Comments on Draft Staff Report on Revision of the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments, September 2005, Prepared by the State Water Resources Control Board*

Board of Directors
Representing:

- County of Sacramento
- County of Yolo
- City of Citrus Heights
- City of Elk Grove
- City of Folsom
- City of Rancho Cordova
- City of Sacramento
- City of West Sacramento

- Robert F. Shanks
District Engineer
- Marcia Maurer
Chief Financial Officer
- Wendell H. Kido
District Manager
- Mary K. Snyder
Collection Systems Manager
- Stan R. Dean
Plant Manager

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) appreciates the opportunity to provide written comments on the State Water Resources Control Board's draft Staff Report regarding preparation of the 2006 303(d) List. SRCSD is a regional sanitation district that serves over a million customers in the Sacramento metropolitan area and owns and operates the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP). The SRWTP discharges directly into the Sacramento River downstream of Freeport, which in this latest revision of the 303(d) list is now part of a new water quality limited segment titled the Delta Waterways (northern portion), in Region 5.

We commend you and your staff for the obvious effort that has gone into the documentation for the proposed 2006 listings. The draft Staff Report contains a much more detailed description and analysis of the basis and information used for listing recommendations than past processes. However, SRCSD has four major areas of disagreement with the proposed 303(d) list, as described below. SRCSD also agrees with both the decisions to delete water quality segments from the 2002 list, and not to add four segments to the previous list.

MAJOR AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSED REVISED 2006 LIST

One of the four points of disagreement is a continuing concern from past listing and policy preparation products. The other three are new issues from the September 2005 documents. In summary, our major concerns are:

1. Use of un-adopted numeric "criteria" and other bases identified in the Listing Policy that are not water quality standards.
2. Listing of Exotic Species as a pollutant in many water quality limited segments.
3. Adding DDT as a pollutant in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality limited segment.
4. Adding polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) as a pollutant in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) water quality limited segment.

1. Use of Un-adopted Numeric Values as Surrogates for Numeric Water Quality Objectives in the 303(d) Listing Process

SRCSO has continuously pointed out that the use of un-adopted numeric values as surrogate water quality objectives without formally adopting these values through the process defined in the California Water Code is inconsistent with State Law, specifically the Porter Cologne Act and the Administrative Procedures Act. As previously noted, the California Water Code establishes a clear process for the adoption of water quality objectives as part of the standard-setting process in Sections 13000, 13241 and 13242.

- In SRCSD's letter of November 2, 2001 to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board), we stated that the Regional Board was using numeric surrogate values for fish tissue criteria, USEPA 304(a) advisory criteria or guidelines, un-adopted California Department of Fish and Game or Department of Health Services guidelines, and health advisories imposed outside the Clean Water Act process. In that letter we also stated that SRCSD had cited this inconsistency in previous letters to the Regional Board (January 20, 1998) and the State Board (March 17 and May 26, 1998) regarding the 1998 303 (d) list.
- Similarly in SRCSD's letter to Rik Rasmussen of the State Board on February 18, 2004 we indicated that the proposed Listing Policy, Regulatory Structure and Options and the S.B. 469 TMDL Guidance were flawed because they were not using water quality standards. The 303(d) listing process and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) that result from them are necessary to correct impairments to the standards, and if the standards are not appropriate the TMDLs also will be inappropriate. The letter to Mr. Rasmussen also explained that current standards need to be reevaluated because it is well documented that standards contained in the Regional Board's Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the San Joaquin River were not adopted in accordance with state law requirements. (see *A Review of the Administrative Record for the Central Valley Water Quality Control Plan, 1973-1994*, by the California Resources Management Institute, September 2003.) Consequently, that letter strongly recommended that all new policy and guidance documents advise the Regional Boards to conduct standards reviews where appropriate, and not just rely on developing Use Attainability Analyses or Site-Specific Objectives.

2. Listing of Exotic Species as a Pollutant

State Board staff have included Exotic Species as a pollutant in the 2006 303(d) listing process for the first time. While SRCSD agrees that invasive species have caused detrimental aquatic use impacts in some areas of the state, we recommend that consideration of Exotic Species as pollutants, as defined in the draft Staff Report should be deleted from this revision. SRCSD has reached this recommendation based on the following four facts:

- We agree with the Central Valley Regional Board that there are legal issues with the pollutant definition as included in this Staff Report. The draft Staff Report cites a recent court ruling (Northwest Environmental Advocates et al. vs. USEPA, 2005) regarding discharges from vessels. In the ruling, the Court specifically referred to invasive species discharged from ballast water as being pollutants. However, the State Board proposed listing would expand the applicability of this ruling to any established "non-native" species (e.g. striped bass) when there is no ongoing discharge of these non-native species. The Regional Board has reviewed this ruling and found that it does not have the authority to regulate the distribution and population of established non-native species (Executive Officer's Report - 28/29 November 2005).
- We also agree with the Central Valley Regional Board that there are technical issues with the description of the term pollutant. Specifically, a portion of the discussion in the draft Staff Report suggests that hydromodification and changes in flow regime are primarily responsible for the decline in native fish species. The Regional Board reviewed this portion of the listing discussion and finds that causes of declines of native fishes for these reasons are also outside their jurisdiction (Executive Officer's Report - 28/29 November 2005).

- The draft Staff Report admits that "no evaluation guidelines are available that can be used to assess the potential for impact from exotic species."
- The Fact Sheets on the use of Exotic Species present a confusing array of criteria, guidelines, impacts and locations. In addition, some non-native species may be beneficial.

3. Adding DDT as a Pollutant in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) Segment

State Board staff have added DDT as a pollutant in this water quality limited segment based on the fact that four of six samples exceeded the OEHHA Screening Value for fish tissue, a frequency that exceeds the allowable level in the Listing Policy. The Evaluation Guideline used in the Fact Sheet is 100 ng/g, the OEHHA Screening Value set in 1999. SRCSD strongly disagrees with this conclusion for the following reasons:

- The use of OEHHA screening values for fish tissue is not appropriate from a technical or legal standpoint. Please refer to the comments made by Central Valley Clean Water Agencies on this point, positions which SRCSD endorses.
- The last sample of fish tissue taken in the analysis that exceeded the Screening Value was in 1998, eight years ago. Smallmouth bass collected in 2001 did not exceed the Screening Value. Therefore the most recent sample taken did not exceed the Screening Value.
- Four types of fish were sampled between 1992 and 1998, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, channel catfish and white catfish. While all of the catfish sampled exceeded the Screening Value, none of the bass exceeded the value.
- SRCSD has been collecting effluent data on DDT since 1983. All 194 samples of effluent have been non-detects over that time period, with a detection limit of <0.15 ug/L for DDT.
- Significant changes have occurred in the Sacramento River and its watershed since 1998. DDT should not be listed unless data within the last five years are available.

4. Adding PCBs as a Pollutant in the Delta Waterways (northern portion) Segment

State Board staff have added PCBs as a pollutant in this water quality limited segment based on the fact that two of six sample exceeded the OEHHA Screening Value for fish tissue, because this exceeds the allowable frequency in the Listing Policy. The Evaluation Guideline used in the Fact Sheet for PCBs is 20 ng/g, the Screening Value set in 1999. SRCSD also strongly disagrees with this conclusion for the following reasons:

- The use of OEHHA screening values for fish tissue is not appropriate from a technical or legal standpoint. Please refer to the comments made by Central Valley Clean Water Agencies on this point, positions which SRCSD endorses.
- Fish tissue samples that exceeded the Screening Value were in catfish, as long ago as 1992 and only as recent as 1998, 14 years ago and eight years ago, respectively. Smallmouth bass collected in 2001 did not exceed the Screening Value. Therefore the most recent sample did not exceed the Screening value.
- Four types of fish were sampled and analyzed between 1992 and 1998, white catfish, channel catfish, smallmouth bass and largemouth bass. Only one type of the four, white catfish, exceeded the Screening Value.
- SRCSD has been collecting effluent data on PCBs since 1983. All 194 samples of effluent have been non-detects over that time period, with a detection limit of <0.5 ug/L for PCBs.
- Significant changes have occurred in the Sacramento River and its watershed since 1998. PCBs should not be added to the list unless data within the last five years are used.

Craig J. Wilson, Chief
January 31, 2006
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POINTS OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSED REVISED 2006 303(d) LIST

SRCS D has reviewed the Fact Sheets for water segments and pollutants of interest to, or geographically near, our service area. Our review finds several points of agreement with State Board staff both on deleting water quality segments from the 2002 list, and on not adding further segments to the 303(d) list in Region 5.

Deleting Diazinon as a Pollutant in Four Segments in Region 5

State Board staff have removed diazinon as a pollutant from four water quality segments in Region 5. SRCSD agrees with and supports these deletions based on a combination of water quality data analyses and the completion and implementation of a TMDL program. The four segments cited are:

- The Feather River, Lower (Lake Oroville Dam to Confluence with Sacramento River)
- Morrison Creek
- Sacramento River (Knights Landing to the Delta)
- Sutter Bypass

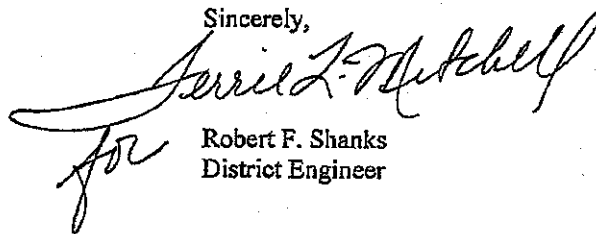
Not Adding to Four Water Quality Segments in Region 5

State Board staff have reviewed and decided not to add a number of segments to the 303(d) list in Region 5. Among those of particular interest to SRCSD, we agree and support the decisions not to list the following combinations of water quality segments and pollutants:

- Diazinon in the American River, Lower (Nimbus Dam to Confluence with Sacramento River)
- Mercury in the Bear River, Lower (below Camp Far West Reservoir)
- Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon in the Sacramento River (Red Bluff to Knights Landing)
- Chlorpyrifos in the Sacramento River (Knights Landing to the Delta)

In summary, SRCSD has reviewed the State Board staff report and supporting documents regarding proposed revisions to the 2002 303(d) list for implementation in 2006. SRCSD appreciates the opportunity to review these documents and requests that the SWRCB make changes in the proposed 303(d) list as specifically stated above. Our staff is available to discuss these requested changes and/or the basis for these requests in greater detail at your convenience.

Sincerely,



for Robert F. Shanks
District Engineer

RFS/TM:jc

cc: Members, State Water Resources Control Board
Celeste Cantù, Executive Officer, State Water Resources Control Board
Wendell Kido, SRCSD
Terrie Mitchell, SRCSD