

**State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Quality  
Trash Policy Public Advisory Group**

**3rd Meeting**

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

**Meeting Notes**

The group convened at approximately 10:00 AM in San Pedro at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. Members in attendance were: Miriam Gordon, Sean Bothwell, Gary Hildebrand, Charles Moore, Geoff Brosseau, and Tim Shesteck. Dominic Gregorio and Stephanie Lopez represented the State Water Board. Erica Hanley (TetraTech) was also in attendance. Stephanie took notes.

Geoff gave a presentation of trash provision in the San Francisco Bay area Phase 1 MS4 permit. The permit has some different approaches than the Los Angeles TMDLs. One option is structural controls (retrofit catch basin trash devices) but other approaches are also allowed. Catch basin retrofits may cost more than a couple hundred dollars apiece. Geoff also discussed the Bay Area "Litter Campaign", and said he would send a recent report from the Assoc. of Bay Area Governments to Erica and the group.

Trash data generation rates will be provided to the Regional Board on February 1, 2012. A short term reduction plan will be due to the Regional Board by 2014.

Dominic presented some information on recent State Board enforcement actions in the SF Bay area. There were Cleanup and Abatement Orders issued against four companies for discharges of plastic pellets that contaminated bay habitat including salt marshes. The orders, which are public information, were discussed. They ranged from a \$22,000 to \$25,000 apiece.

Tim and others briefly discussed the status of Operation Clean Sweep. Tim also requested copies of the CAA orders to be sent to the group.

Dominic also presented some information on State Water Board grant funded projects for trash BMPs in Long Beach. Unfortunately, for this project certain BMPs were not working or maintained as planned and trash is still getting through the devices. State Board Division of Financial Assistance has been following up with the grantees.

Charlie shared his new book, *Plastic Ocean*, and then gave a presentation on the Prop 13 study performed by Algalita to assess trash in the LA River, San Gabriel River and Coyote Creek. They attempted different methods for collecting in flowing channelized streams. Charlie discussed the results that are published in a peer-reviewed paper (*Quantity and type of plastic debris flowing from two urban rivers to coastal waters and beaches of Southern California*). Plastic debris was segregated into two size classes:  $\geq 1\text{mm}$ ,  $< 4.75\text{mm}$ , and  $\geq 4.75\text{mm}$ . The debris was first sorted into natural, plastic, and non-plastic manmade items. The plastic debris was then classified by type as fragments, foams, pre-production resin pellets, whole items and films. Most of the plastic sampled (by number of pieces) were foams, followed by fragments, pre-production pellets and whole items (such as plastic cups and bottles). In terms of weight, whole items were the heaviest, followed by fragments, pellets and foam.

The group then discussed air gun (toy) soft pellets, which are also causing ocean pollution.

Erica presented some background on TetraTech's preparation of the draft Substitute Environmental Document (SED) for the State Board. Members then discussed the SED and recommended changes.

Tim mentioned that he had sent comments to Emily Siegel (not present) on the SED and Dominic stated that he would check on that with Emily.

Miriam stated that the introduction is too light. Members requested that the background section expand more on the purpose of policies and what a "trash policy" means in the general sense. Dominic discussed the relationship between the SED and the policy, and also discussed the CEQA requirements for policies and amendment to water quality control plans. For example, TMDLs are basin plan amendments and have to go through CEQA.

The PAG suggested this background section should set the stage for what is going on in California more definitively: express the need for a statewide policy; identify key water bodies impaired by trash and discuss some relevant actions; acknowledge that not all regions are actively monitoring trash in state waters and uniform recognition of this pollutant needs/should be established.

Regarding sources of trash, members requested a modification of this section to expand on the natural progression of trash from a litter to pollutant in surface waters. Miriam made suggestions on re-organization of the parts of the SED. The sources of trash section should incorporate additional studies mentioned during the meeting (i.e., Plastic Debris in the California Marine Ecosystem: A summary of Current Research Solution Efforts and Data Gaps, Ocean Science Trust; Trash studies in LA County and the City of LA). Dominic agreed that Tetra Tech would perform re-writes and attempt to use PAG suggestions where appropriate and within the TetraTech budget.

The definition of trash was discussed. Certain members were conflicted on whether or not to include "leaf litter" or "natural vegetation" in the definition of trash. An alternative definition of trash will be used that incorporates the legal definitions of "waste" and "litter," but will not explicitly include "leaf litter," or "natural vegetation." Green waste is already addressed in municipal laws and therefore excluding it from the definition would avoid redundancy. Ultimately, implementation of the trash policy may effectively address both anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic sources of trash, in that leaf litter will also be collected in the full capture devices.

PAG members were also conflicted on whether or not to include a size limitation on trash. A size limitation of waste material over 5mm in size was discussed as an alternative definition in trash.

Regarding preproduction plastics, the members discussed whether or not to specify preproduction plastic types (i.e., resins and/or pellets) and plastic additives. The PAG will follow-up on a consensus on what level of specificity will be used on preproduction plastics.

To wrap up the discussion it was suggested that everyone look over the documents and make any new comments that have not yet been submitted and the comments would be

provided to TetraTech. The group was asked to respond by November 10, 2011. In addition, Dominic will send Erica and the PAG the new Oceans Science Trust Marine Debris Report (in MSWord). The meeting was adjourned shortly after 3:00 pm.