



Fact Sheet

Statewide Urban Pesticides Reduction

What are the Urban Pesticides Amendments?

The [Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Storm Water](#) (STORMS), adopted by the State Water Board in January 2016, aims to lead the evolution of storm water management in California by advancing the perspective that storm water is a valuable resource, supporting policies for collaborative watershed-level storm water management and pollution prevention, and integrating regulatory and non-regulatory interests. Under Objective 6 of STORMS (increase source control and pollution prevention), the State Water Board is developing a statewide framework for urban pesticides reduction (Urban Pesticides Amendments) that will employ a multi-agency approach calling on participation from the Water Boards, municipalities, and state and federal pesticide regulators.

A primary goal of the statewide Urban Pesticides Amendments is to improve collaboration among regulators, leading to better management of pesticides in urban runoff. The statewide Urban Pesticides Amendments will also organize coordinated pesticides and toxicity monitoring and data sharing, and establish consistent minimum pesticides control efforts for MS4 storm water permittees.

Why are the Urban Pesticides Amendments needed?

Pesticides applied on outdoor surfaces in urban areas have the potential to wash off during storm events or as a result of over-irrigation, and may end up in rivers, lakes, streams, and the ocean. Pesticides in urban runoff can be harmful to aquatic organisms, and could potentially contribute to human health risks if discharged in or near drinking water sources. The Water Boards have identified over 100 waterbodies on the 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies as exceeding pesticide water quality standards with urban runoff attributed as the potential source. As monitoring increases and monitoring methods improve, more waterbodies are expected to be listed as impaired for pesticides. These 303(d) listings generally require the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads or TMDLs, which are then incorporated in MS4 permits as an effort to attain water quality standards.

Control of pesticide discharges in urban runoff falls under the responsibility of the operators of municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), whose discharges are regulated by the State and Regional Water Boards under Clean Water Act MS4 permits. However, State law does not allow local authorities to limit pesticides sale and use. Municipalities therefore must focus on source control and urban runoff reduction efforts to control pesticides in their discharges. While these efforts by MS4s may be able to reduce pesticides in runoff, they may not be able to reduce pesticide concentrations far enough to consistently meet water quality standards.

The most effective way to reduce urban pesticide-related impairments now and into the future is source control through coordination with state and federal pesticide regulators. It is important to note that these regulators have different legal mandates than the Water Boards in regulating pesticide use. While coordination with these agencies will require a commitment of time and resources, it will likely be the most effective pollution prevention measure. Successful coordination in the past between water quality regulators, pesticide regulators, municipalities, and others through partnerships such as the Urban Pesticides Pollution Prevention Partnership has led to significant improvements in pesticide use regulation for the protection of



water quality. A statewide framework for working with pesticide regulators would ensure these efforts can continue to grow and provide a more efficient, effective, and consistent approach to addressing and preventing pesticides-related water quality pollution.

How are the Amendments being developed?

The Urban Pesticides Amendments team is a collaboration of representatives from the State Water Board, the San Francisco Bay and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Boards, U.S. EPA Region 9, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, and municipality representatives from the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA). The project is additionally guided by the STORMS Implementation Committee, which includes representatives from the business community and environmental advocacy groups.

A statewide plan for urban pesticides reduction would be established through an Amendment to the Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries Water Quality Control Plan, and to the Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California. The plan would include the following elements:

1. Coordination framework for working with U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs and the Department of Pesticide Regulation to reduce and prevent pesticide impairments in urban water bodies;
2. Minimum pesticides control measures for municipal storm water permittees and model permit language; and,
3. Statewide monitoring coordination framework for pesticides and toxicity between the Water Boards, Department of Pesticide Regulation, and municipal storm water permittees, including improved data management that facilitates improved data flow.

Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholder outreach will occur initially through the STORMS Implementation Committee of stakeholders, which includes primary participation by representatives from the California Stormwater Quality Association, the California Coast Keepers Alliance, the Association of California Water Agencies, and the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance. Additional public stakeholder meetings and outreach will be held as needed. Public review and comments on the proposed Amendment will be solicited during CEQA Scoping and the public review period in spring of 2017. Following responses to comment the proposed Amendment will be brought to the Board in winter 2018 for potential adoption by the State Water Board at a public meeting.

Proposed Timeline

Spring 2016: Project work teams established
Fall 2016: CEQA Scoping
Spring 2017: Release documents for public review and comment
Winter 2018: Consideration for adoption by State Water Board

How Can Interested Persons Stay Updated and Be Involved

For more information about the project visit the State Water Board's [STORMS webpage](#) or contact Noelle Patterson, Noelle.Patterson@waterboards.ca.gov.

To receive update email notifications of project development and public notices and/or workshops, please sign up to the STORMS email [subscription list](#), select "Water Quality," and check the box for "Storm Water Planning."

This fact sheet was last updated on October 25, 2016.