

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION – OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS  
SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

**ITEM 6**

**SUBJECT**

INFORMATIONAL ITEM: CALIFORNIA WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL RELEASE OF INITIAL INTERNET PORTALS TO CONNECT DECISION MAKERS AND THE PUBLIC WITH WATER QUALITY INFORMATION

**DISCUSSION**

- *Is it Safe to Swim in Our Waters?*
- *Is It Safe to Eat Fish and Shellfish from Our Waters?*

These are the first of several water quality themes addressed by a new set of internet portals being developed under the oversight of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council.

Senate Bill 1070 (Kehoe, 2006) mandated that water quality monitoring, and assessment activities be coordinated among organizations inside and outside California government, and that this information be made available to decision makers and the public via the internet. In November 2007, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Natural Resources Agency signed a Memorandum of Understanding that established the Monitoring Council, as required by Senate Bill (SB) 1070, statutes of 2006. The State Water Board has the responsibility to administer the Monitoring Council. Last December, the Monitoring Council sent its initial recommendations to the Secretaries of Cal/EPA and the Natural Resources Agency for coordinating water quality monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts throughout the State. Those recommendations were reported to the State Water Board in an information item, also in December. These new internet portals represent the initial implementation of the Monitoring Council's vision, as outlined in those recommendations.

In conjunction with expert stakeholder work groups, the Monitoring Council is bringing together water quality information from a wide variety of organizations with special expertise. Water quality information on swimming safety is coordinated through the Beach Water Quality Workgroup (Southern California) and the Central/Northern California Ocean and Bay Water Quality Monitoring Group. Information on the safety of eating sport fish is being addressed by the Bioaccumulation Oversight Group (BOG) of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). Through these work groups, local, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations have all pitched in to address these water quality questions.

The new internet portals bring water quality information together in a single location and in an easy to understand manner for the public, environmental organizations, and water quality professionals. View the new portal at [www.waterboards.ca.gov/monitoringcouncil/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/monitoringcouncil/). The portals include interactive maps and monitoring data that focus on swimming and fish consumption safety questions from a variety of perspectives. The goal is to make this information as timely and user-friendly, as possible.

Within the next few months, additional web portals will be released to address the following water quality questions:

- Are Our Aquatic Ecosystems Healthy?
- Is Our Water Safe to Drink?

These initial portal efforts will focus on wetlands and groundwater, respectively.

The Monitoring Council and work groups are continually working to improve the quality of the information presented in these web portals and the underlying water quality monitoring and assessment programs. The portals ask users to help to make them better by sending in comments and suggestions, attending meeting of the Monitoring Council, or getting involved in one or more of the expert stakeholder work groups. More information is on the web at [www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/monitoring\\_council/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/monitoring_council/) .

**POLICY ISSUE**

None at this time – informational item

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None at this time – informational item

**REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT**

None at this time – informational item

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION or  
ADVISE OF STAFF ACTION**

None