STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
OCTOBER 4, 2011

ITEM 7

SUBJECT

INFORMATION ITEM ON AB 2222 IMPLEMENTATION: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON GROUNDWATER CONTAMINANTS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR GROUNDWATER RELIANT COMMUNITIES.

DISCUSSION

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is required to prepare two reports to the Legislature. (Wat. Code, § 10782). The first report, delivered to the Legislature in April 2010, recommended funding options to extend the Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) program until January 1, 2024, and outlined ways to enhance public accessibility of information on groundwater conditions.

The second report, following public comment, is due to the Legislature January 1, 2012, and will identifiy both the communities that rely on contaminated groundwater as a primary source of drinking water, the principal contaminants and other constituents of concern in the groundwater, potential solutions, and funding sources to either cleanup groundwater or provide alternative water supplies to communities.

State Water Board staff will present the preliminary findings of the draft report. The communities identified as relying on groundwater as a primary source of drinking waster are found throughout California. Although these communities are found throughout the state, most are located in the Southern California Inland Empire, the east side of the San Joaquin Valley, the Salinas Valley and the Santa Maria Valley. Many of these communities are small, rural and economically disadvantaged and are unable to afford available treatment technologies or alternative water supplies.

The contaminants that are most frequently found in concentrations that exceed the drinking water standards for public supply are both naturally occurring and man-made and occur throughout the state. In descending order, the ten most frequently detected contaminants in the communities reliant on groundwater are arsenic, nitrate, radionuclides (gross alpha), perchlorate, uranium, tetrachloroethlyene (PCE), 1,2-Dibromo-3-chloropropane (DBCP), trichloroethylene (TCE), fluoride, and carbon tetrachloride. Of these contaminants, arsenic, radionuclides, uranium, and fluoride are considered to be naturally occurring. It should be recognized that human activities (mostly related to irrigation) have been shown to mobilize all these contaminants except fluoride to groundwater. The remaining contaminants are man-made.

POLICY ISSUE

This is an Informational Item.

FISCAL IMPACT

None (Informational Item only).

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

None (Informational Item only).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

None (Informational Item only).

Shared information related to this item will assist the Water Boards in reaching Goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan Update: 2008-2012. Goal 2 is to improve and protect groundwater quality in high-use basins by 2030. Goal 3 is to promote sustainable local water supplies.