

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF July30&31, 2015

Prepared on June 30, 2015

ITEM NUMBER: 6

**Drought Conditions Update by Regional Liaison to Water Rights
Division**

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KEY INFORMATION:

Location: Region-Wide
Type of Activities: Permitting, Interagency Coordination, Technical Assistance, Grant and Loan Funding, Stakeholder Involvement

THIS ACTION: Board Discussion/Information/Direction

DISCUSSION

Central Coast Water Board staff has seen a decline in specific tasks related to water rights, as the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff has responded to the water rights and drinking water issues presented by the on-going drought conditions in the state. However, some drought-related tasks continue to emerge in the region through permitting, groundwater and spill cleanup and investigations, interagency coordination (since we regulate municipalities for wastewater discharges who also provide water supply), and grant-funding outreach. Staff remains flexible and available to facilitate or implement drought-related tasks regionally or to assist State Water Board staff as tasks emerge.

Staff continues to track and facilitate drought assistance and water supply improvement in critical areas. See the specific area information in the subsequent section of this report.

State-wide Drought Information and Activities

State Water Board Drought Updates

The State Water Board has curtailed over 9,000 water rights for surface water diversions in key watersheds. The watersheds where rights have been curtailed include the following watersheds in the North Coast region and the Central Valley region of the state:

Sacramento River and Delta, San Joaquin River, Scott River, Deer Creek and Antelope Creek (tributaries to Sacramento River), Upper San Joaquin River, Merced River.

A summary of curtailed water rights can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/docs/curtail_summary_2015.pdf

More detailed information about the curtailments can be found at the State Water Board's Drought Information page:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/index.shtml#

The State Water Board recently adopted an emergency regulation to help protect federal- and state-listed anadromous fish in four priority Russian River tributary watersheds (Dutch Bill Creek, Green Valley Creek, portions of Mark West Creek, and Mill Creek). The emergency regulation would require: (1) enhanced water conservation; and (2) reporting information on water use.

Central Coast Water Board General Activities Related to Drought

Drought-Related Complaints

Central Coast Water Board staff continues to refer people with complaints related to water use and diversions to the State Water Board's Water Rights Enforcement webpage and the complaint form:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/enforcement/complaints/index.shtml

The State Water Board is giving highest priority to these types of complaints when they are in critical watersheds that have had water rights curtailed due to drought conditions or in watersheds that have resident endangered species.

Since the last Water Board Meeting and Drought Update Report, Central Coast Water Board received the following complaints: 1) a developer refuses to allow residents to replace their lawns and curbside lawns with water-wise landscaping and requires residents to water the lawns, 2) homeowner is deliberately overusing water to establish precedence in anticipation of State cutbacks on allowed usage; daily floods road and surrounding areas to harass neighbors for complaining.

The State Water Board is prepared to distribute \$625 million of Proposition 1 funds for water recycling projects throughout the state, including a few potential projects located along the Central Coast. Potential projects in the Central Coast region include construction funding for a groundwater recharge project proposed by the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency and for a satellite plant at the public golf course in Pacific Grove. Also included is a grant to study recycled sewage water for use in the Five Cities area of San Luis Obispo.

Monterey County

Water Board staff is tracking development of water sources in Monterey County. The Monterey County Water Resources Agency, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, the city of Salinas, and the Marina Coast Water District continue to pursue water sources for expanding the recycled water supply. Agreements to date consider tapping Peninsula wastewater and storm runoff and Salinas-area produce wash water and contaminated runoff to help meet regional water needs. Some water would be steered to a project known as Pure Water Monterey, in which treated water would be pumped into and stored in the Seaside groundwater basin. The project is coordinated with California American Water's desalination plant as part of the Peninsula water supply project, which is designed to help replace state-mandated pumping reductions from the Carmel River. The deal would also provide additional irrigation water for the existing Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project, which delivers recycled water for crop irrigation.

The Executive Officer and staff members attended a stakeholder meeting with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, the city of Salinas and the Marina Coast Water District on July 2, 2015. The various agencies presented the project timeline and key

milestones related to permitting agencies' processes and expectations, the status of responding to comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report and certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report, an update on water rights issues and applications to the State Water Board, issues and plans to manage Blanco Drain water, financing (including status of applications to the State Water Board for Proposition 1 funds), and status of inter-agency agreements. The agencies are making good progress in all these areas and are pushing hard to resolve all issues, finalize agreements and secure necessary permits in about 18 months.

Paso Robles

The application to form the Paso Robles Basin Water District submitted by the County of San Luis Obispo is currently being reviewed by the San Luis Obispo Local Area Formation Committee (LAFCO). On May 21, 2015, LAFCO held a study session about the Basin and Resolution of Application. On June 18, LAFCO held a study session on the Paso Robles Basin Water District and Basin Boundaries (suggesting the boundaries be based on recent studies rather than those currently on record in Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118). Next steps in the schedule for review and consideration of the application include: notice of public hearing in July, staff report release mid-late July, first public hearing on August 20, second public hearing, September 17, additional hearings as needed. Additional information can be found at:

http://www.slolafco.com/Staff_Reports_2.htm

Cambria

Staff has been carefully tracking the success, permit compliance and need for adjustments to the permit for long-term water augmentation and water quality protection.

Cayucos

Cayucos and Morro Bay currently operate a wastewater treatment plant jointly in Morro Bay. That plant needs to be moved away from the coast (as Coastal Commission did not approve a rebuild at that location due to future sea level rise). Cayucos was negotiating with Morro Bay about location, operation, financing and producing recycled water. Those negotiations resulted in Cayucos's determining to build their own plant. Staff recently met with staff from the Cayucos Sanitary District who provided an update on their proposed options for sites and operations and represented an optimistic view that they could begin construction on a new plant that would treat water for reuse in the next two years.

CONCLUSION

Given the severity of the drought and the high volume of work in response for the State Board Division of Water Rights, Central Coast Water Board staff will continue to track drought-related activities and issues in the region and provide assistance to stakeholders and the State Water Board as needed. Additionally, Central Coast Water Board staff will take drought conditions and impacts to beneficial uses and water quality into account as we continue to conduct permitting, groundwater and spill cleanup and investigations, interagency coordination and grant-funding outreach or other business affected by the drought.