

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
and
NOTICE OF FILING OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS
Concerning a
Basin Plan Amendment for Methyl and Total Mercury in the
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary**

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board), will consider an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan). The proposed amendment sets forth a program to control methylmercury and total mercury in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Delta). The proposed control program addresses beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and an implementation program to achieve the objectives. This program will satisfy the Central Valley Water Board's obligation under the federal Clean Water Act section 303(d) to address the Delta fish mercury impairment by developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Delta. This program will have requirements for municipal and industrial wastewater, urban runoff, irrigated agriculture and wetlands, flood conveyance, water management, dredging, and the Cache Creek settling basin.

The Central Valley Water Board will hold two public hearings on the proposed amendment, first a testimony hearing and then an adoption hearing:

Dates: Testimony Hearing: 24 or 25 April 2008
Adoption Hearing: 31 July or 1 August 2008
(Please contact staff 2 weeks in advance of the meetings for specific dates and times)
Time: To be determined.

Place: Central Valley Water Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Action on the proposed Basin Plan amendment will be taken in accordance with a regulatory program certified under Section 21080.5 of the Public Resources Code as exempt from the requirement to prepare an environmental impact report under the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code section 2100 et seq.). The proposed amendment and supporting draft staff report include environmental documentation required under the California Environmental Quality Act section 21080.5; Title 23 of the California Public Resources Code sections 3775-3782; Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act sections 13050, 13241, and 13242; Clean Water Act section 303(d); and other applicable laws and regulations.

Staff's review of environmental impacts that could result from the adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendment indicates that implementation activities associated with a mercury control program have the potential to cause unavoidable adverse environmental effects. Mitigation is possible, but it is within the jurisdiction of agencies implementing site-specific projects to impose. The staff report reviews potential impacts and possible mitigation. The staff report also explains that the risk posed to humans and wildlife by the consumption of contaminated Delta fish is an overriding consideration that takes precedence over these potential adverse environmental effects.

