

ITEM: 14

SUBJECT: Control Program for Salt and Boron Discharges into the Lower San Joaquin River--*Consideration of Resolution Approving a Real-Time Management Program for meeting salinity water quality objectives in the Lower San Joaquin River (LSJR) at Vernalis*

BOARD ACTION: Adoption of the Real Time Management Program (RTMP) Resolution.

DISCUSSION: In September 2004, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) adopted the Control Program for Salt and Boron Discharges (Control Program) into the LSJR to achieve compliance with salinity water quality objectives at Vernalis, the boundary of the Delta.

The Control Program prescribes salt load allocations to 7 geographic areas that comprise the LSJR basin and also to imported salt from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC) which is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). Item 2 of the Control Program provides that dischargers of irrigation return flows from irrigated lands will be in compliance with the Control Program if they meet any of the following conditions:

1. They cease discharging to surface water,
2. Their discharge does not exceed 315 micro Siemens per centimeter ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) electrical conductivity based on a 30-day running average,
3. They operate under WDRs that include effluent limits for salt, or
4. They operate under a waiver of WDRs for salt and boron discharges to the LSJR.

The schedule of compliance for load allocations is phased with areas contributing the most salt to the LSJR required to comply first. The first compliance date was 28 July 2014 for nonpoint source dischargers on the west side of the LSJR basin and USBR for the DMC during normal through dry years and by 28 July 2018 during critically dry years. We are currently experiencing a critically dry year.

As an alternative to WDRs with fixed salinity requirements, the Control Program provides the opportunity for USBR and dischargers to participate in a Central Valley Water Board-approved RTMP. Participation and attainment of Vernalis salinity and boron water quality objectives constitutes compliance with the Control Program.

The Control Program allows USBR and the Central Valley Water Board the opportunity to enter into a Management Agency Agreement (MAA) to address salt imports from the DMC. In December 2008, an initial MAA was signed and included provisions allowing USBR to evaluate the feasibility of a RTMP and lead stakeholders' efforts to develop one. Upon completion of MAA's work items and evaluation of the results, USBR and Central Valley Water Board staffs concluded a RTMP is viable for salinity management of the LSJR, and prepared a revised MAA in support of an RTMP. USBR and LSJR dischargers have developed this RTMP for Central Valley Water Board approval. The Resolution for a revised MAA is being presented concurrently. The proposed RTMP framework recognizes the need for strong USBR

commitment and support and therefore includes placeholders for the revised MAA and for the annual USBR salinity work plan referenced within the MAA.

The RTMP framework document was released for public review and comment on June 4, 2014. Public comments were received from the San Joaquin Tributary Authority and Stockton East Water District. Both groups support the development of a RTMP but recommend that the USBR take a more prominent role in its success and request specific documentation of the activities that will occur in the coming year. Staffs from the Central Valley Water Board, USBR, and San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority have drafted responses to comments.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Resolution to authorize the Executive Officer to approve the RTMP on the Central Valley Water Board's behalf.

Mgmt. Review

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Legal Review _____PEP_____

04/05 December 2014

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