

ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: Amendments to the Water Quality Control Plans for both the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins and for the Tulare Lake Basin to establish a region-wide process for evaluating the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use in agriculturally (Ag) dominated surface water bodies. *Public Workshop*

BOARD ACTION: No formal action. Staff will give a presentation and the Board will receive comments from interested parties.

BACKGROUND: Staff has been developing a Basin Plan Amendment through a stakeholder process to establish a region-wide process for evaluating the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use in agriculturally (Ag) dominated surface water bodies. These Ag dominated surface water bodies include facilities constructed to convey Ag supply and drainage water (or a combination) as well as natural channels that are dominated by agricultural flows during a majority of the irrigation season. Board staff will provide the Board with information regarding the development of the Basin Plan Amendment, including the preliminary alternatives currently under consideration.

The *Sources of Drinking Water Policy* has been incorporated into the Water Quality Control Plans for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins and the Tulare Lake Basin (Basin Plans). As incorporated, the MUN beneficial use applies to all surface and ground water bodies in region unless a water body is specifically listed in the Basin Plans as a water body that does not support the MUN beneficial use. The vast majority of the region's thousands of agriculturally dominated water bodies are not listed in the Basin Plans, which means that the MUN beneficial use currently applies to these water bodies. The water quality objectives that are protective of the MUN beneficial use are the primary and secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). There is concern that the blanket MUN designation via the *Sources of Drinking Water Policy* and the associated water quality objectives may be overly restrictive in Ag dominated water bodies and impact efforts to conserve and recycle water throughout the region.

Numerous stakeholder meetings were held since February 2012 to discuss the development of a Basin Plan Amendment that establishes a region-wide process for evaluating the MUN beneficial use in Ag dominated water bodies. The foundation for the evaluation process developed through these stakeholder meetings is based on previous stakeholder efforts incorporating a water body categorization framework to establish the appropriate beneficial uses and water quality objectives in Ag dominated water bodies (1992 Inland Surface Water Plan and the 1995 Agricultural Waters Task Force).

Board staff will provide information at the workshop regarding the development of the Proposed Amendment, including the preliminary alternatives currently under consideration for a region-wide process that may include the following: 1) adding language to the Basin Plans to differentiate different categories of Ag-dominated surface water bodies based on their characteristics, 2) dedesignating, or incorporating an evaluative process to dedesignate, MUN

uses in water bodies that meet the exceptions in the Sources of Drinking Water Policy, and possibly developing a new beneficial use category for water bodies not expected to provide a potable water supply without altered flow management and/or rigorous non-conventional treatment, and 3) an implementation program to ensure that any dedesignation or recategorization of Ag-dominated water bodies does not result in exceedances of relevant water quality objectives.

ISSUES:

Overall broad issues include:

- Designating the appropriate level of MUN beneficial use while allowing constructed water bodies to be utilized for their intended design and purpose (e.g. irrigation supply channels) and maximizing capacity for recycling and reuse of limited water supplies.
- Establishing the appropriate water quality objectives for a LIMITED-MUN beneficial use designation.
- Ensuring that MUN dedesignation or re-designation does not cause water quality impacts in downstream waters related to drinking water constituents of concern.
- Developing adequate monitoring programs to detect water quality changes and ensure protection of MUN source water in downstream waters.
- Providing a cost-effective and streamlined implementation process.
- Developing a region-wide approach that is flexible enough to address basin-specific issues.

RECOMMENDATION No Board action is required.

Mgmt. Review __JEC__

Legal Review __PEP__

16/17 April 2015

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