

**ITEM:** 14

**SUBJECT:** Status of Developing the Central Valley Salt and Nitrate Management Plan (CV-SALTS): Implementation Alternatives

**BOARD ACTION:** *Informational Item only*

**BACKGROUND:** The Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) initiative is a stakeholder-led process to develop a Salt and Nitrate Management Plan (SNMP) for the Central Valley and basin plan amendment recommendations to support implementation of the SNMP. The goals of CV-SALTS are to provide for an environmentally and economically sustainable future within the Central Valley and to address legacy groundwater nitrate concentrations as well as current nitrate sources that are impacting drinking water supplies. Results of the overall CV-SALTS effort are anticipated to satisfy the State Water Resources Control Board's Recycled Water Policy requiring the development of comprehensive Salt and Nitrate Management Plans (SNMPs) throughout groundwater basins in California.

Over the past year, the CV-SALTS Executive Committee's policy discussion meetings have been focused on evaluating existing regulatory policies and identifying additional regulatory tools to better protect beneficial uses throughout the region. Contracted work included evaluating implementation alternatives. The Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study (SSALTS) evaluated the viability of in-basin, out-of-basin and combination approaches to consolidate and transport salt in a sustainable manner. The alternatives range from source control to identification of in-basin salt management zones to development of a regulated brine line. Additionally, a case study in the Alta Irrigation District is in progress to evaluate alternative compliance strategies that would allow groundwater nitrate issues to be addressed in a phased approach: first to insure safe drinking water; then longer term, managed restoration of the groundwater basin. Reducing additional nitrate loads is recognized to be a critical ongoing component of both phases.

Remaining tasks currently in progress include:

- Phase II of the Conceptual Model: Refinement of calculations for background groundwater quality, assimilative capacity of groundwater, and groundwater quality trends, as well as the focused management study;
- Phase 3 of the SSALTS: Development of salt management implementation measures and a phased implementation strategy for inclusion into the SNMP;
- Lower San Joaquin River Salt and Boron Water Quality

Objectives; and

- Case studies to ground truth policy and implementation recommendations (in progress).

Remaining tasks to be completed include:

- Finalizing the environmental and economic review of alternatives;
- Development of a monitoring and surveillance program; and
- Preparation of the SNMP

The Central Valley SNMP is to be presented to the Board in 2016 as is consistent with requirements of the State Water Board's Recycled Water Policy.

This is an information item only. No specific recommendations have been formulated and none are being proposed for Board consideration at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A - Informational item only.

Mgmt. Review\_\_JEC\_\_

Legal Review\_\_PEP\_\_\_\_\_

**16-17 April 2015**

Central Valley Regional Water Board

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