



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

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SENT VIA EMAIL
December 3, 2008

TO: Stakeholders in the Delta and its Tributary Watersheds and Other Interested Persons

SUBJECT: Delta Methylmercury TMDL Stakeholder Meeting, Process, and Initial Responses to April 2008 Board Hearing Questions

As noted in an announcement earlier in November, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Board) has contracted with the California State University Sacramento, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) to help the Board convene a stakeholder process for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta Estuary (Delta) mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program. The proposed purpose of the process is to clearly identify issues related to the TMDL, improve shared understanding between affected stakeholders and regulators, discuss TMDL solutions, and make recommendations to the Board for the TMDL and Basin Plan amendment.

All interested parties are invited to attend the first informational meeting of this process on **Friday, December 19, 2008**. The meeting location, time, and agenda materials will be sent in a separate announcement early next week. Regarding the selection of individuals to participate in a proposed stakeholder working group, CCP is currently conducting a stakeholder assessment wherein they are interviewing a diverse cross-section of over 70 stakeholders from throughout the Delta and Central Valley (including upstream tributaries). CCP will provide the Board with specific recommendations on how to proceed including the breadth, structure, and duration of a stakeholder working group.

Regarding this, we recognize that no stakeholder working group can be completely inclusive. Time, budget, and size considerations mandate that a working group must be a representative and manageable cross-section of interests rather than a comprehensive collection of all parties. We are committed to have such a representative group and to sponsoring related public participation efforts that support a broader number of interested stakeholders to also be involved. I hope to invite the stakeholder working group participants in early January and to allow an opportunity shortly thereafter to add other stakeholders if warranted. Dates for additional stakeholder meeting(s) will be determined after the December 19 meeting. The meeting on December 19th is an important step to expand a dialogue among all stakeholders, regulators, and staff on this challenging topic. I know that several stakeholders want the Board and staff to hear their perspectives and I support that approach. Similarly, I hope that stakeholders will gain an understanding of our findings and recommendations to date, and consider opportunities for different approaches.

California Environmental Protection Agency

We appreciate those who have been involved in the TMDL effort to-date including the April 2008 Board hearing. As promised, Staff has prepared initial responses to policy questions and amendment options that were presented at the April 2008 hearing, along with initial responses to a number of Board member and stakeholder questions and comments made during the hearing (Attached). We apologize for the delay in distributing this information. Please also note that Staff responses are considered "initial" because, as part of the stakeholder process, we hope to engage in a dialogue with stakeholders to create shared understanding about these topics.

For additional information, please review the following documents on the Central Valley Water Board's Delta Mercury TMDL website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/tmdl/central_valley_projects/delta_hg

- April 24, 2008 staff presentation,
- February 2008 draft staff reports for the proposed Basin Plan amendment, and
- Written stakeholder comments on the February 2008 draft staff reports.

In closing, please forward this letter to any interested stakeholders or researchers. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick Morris (916-464-4621, pmorris@waterboards.ca.gov). We look forward to working with you on this challenging topic. Thank you for your interest in this process.

PAMELA C. CREEDON
Executive Officer

Attachment: Staff's Initial Responses to Questions & Comments