

**Total Maximum Daily Load to Reduce Bacterial Indicator Densities during
Dry Weather at Santa Monica Bay Beaches**



**Prepared by
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region**



January 14, 2002

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Geographical Setting	3
1.2	Regulatory Background	4
2	Problem Identification	5
2.1	Health Risks of Swimming in Water Contaminated with Bacteria	6
2.1.1	Santa Monica Bay Epidemiological Study	6
2.2	Water Quality Standards	7
2.3	Data Review	9
3	Numeric Target	12
4	Assessing Sources	14
4.1	Point Sources	15
4.2	Nonpoint Sources	16
4.2.1	Existing Data Characterizing Sources	16
4.2.2	Dry Weather Source Characterization	17
5	Linkage Analysis	19
5.1	Critical Condition	19
6	Margin of Safety	20
7	Waste Load Allocations	20
7.1	Why waste load allocations are defined as allowable exceedance days: The role of natural subwatersheds	21
7.2	Two methods for measuring exceedance days: The role of modeling and shoreline monitoring data	22
7.2.1	Historical shoreline bacteriological data method	22
7.3	Criteria for determining allowable exceedance days: The role of the reference system and antidegradation	22
7.3.1	Exceedance criteria for dry weather	23
7.4	Future growth	24
7.5	Re-evaluating allowable exceedance levels and interim compliance	24
8	Implementation	25
8.1	Regulatory Mechanisms	25
8.2	Phased Implementation Schedule	26
8.3	Implementation Approach	27
8.4	Cost Considerations	28
8.4.1	Dry Weather Treatment Costs	28
9	Monitoring Programs	29
9.1	Source Characterization	29
9.2	Compliance Determination	31
9.2.1	Follow-up Monitoring	31
10	References	33

Tables

- 1 Santa Monica Bay Beaches Listed for Coliform
- 2 Santa Monica Bay Beaches Listed for Beach Closures
- 3 Land Use as a Percent of Total Subwatershed Area
- 4 Bacteria Objectives for REC-1 Marine Waters
- 5 Average Percentage of Days Exceeding Any Bacterial Indicator for Shoreline Bacteriological Monitoring Stations in Santa Monica Bay
- 6 Heal the Bay's Annual Beach Report Card Grades for SMB Beaches
- 7 Summary of Dry-weather Bacteria Counts in the Mixing Zone at Various Storm Drains Discharging to Santa Monica Bay
- 8 Summary of Dry-weather Bacteria Counts in Storm Drain Discharges to Santa Monica Bay
- 9 Summary of Dry-weather Bacteria Counts for Ballona Creek and Lagoon
- 10 Summary of Dry-weather Bacteria Counts for Malibu Creek and Lagoon
- 11 Allowable Number of Days per Year that May Exceed Any Bacterial Indicator based on Daily or Weekly Sampling Regimes for Existing Shoreline Monitoring Stations
- 12 Average Percentage of Days Exceeding Any Bacterial Indicator and the Required Reduction in the Number of Days of Exceedance to Achieve Compliance with the TMDL
- 13 Implementation Schedule
- 14 Estimated Cost for Low-Flow Diversion of Major Storm Drains Entering Santa Monica Bay

Figures

- 1 Major Subwatersheds, Streams and Lakes
- 2 Northern Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Beaches Listed as Impaired due to Exceedances of Bacteria Standards
- 3 Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Beaches Listed as Impaired due to Exceedances of Bacteria Standards
- 4 Southern Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Beaches Listed as Impaired due to Exceedances of Bacteria Standards
- 5 Northern Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Beaches Listed as Impaired due to Beach Closures
- 6 Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Beaches Listed as Impaired due to Beach Closures
- 7 Southern Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Beaches Listed as Impaired due to Beach Closures
- 8 Northern Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Land Use and Subwatersheds
- 9 Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Land Use and Subwatersheds
- 10 Southern Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area: Land Use and Subwatersheds
- 11 Children Playing in Storm Drain at Paradise Cove Beach

Appendices

- A Regional Board Resolution 01-018
- B “Retrospective Evaluation of Shoreline Water Quality”
- C Santa Monica BayKeeper Inventory of Drains with Potential to Discharge to Beach
- D Historical Rainfall Data at LAX
- E Technical Note: Bacterial and Coliphage Degradation Experiments in Fresh and Marine Water
- F Technical Note: Factors Affecting Dilution of Bacteria between the Storm Drain and Wave Wash
- G Responsible Jurisdictions by Subwatershed
- H Assembly Bill 538, Public beaches: bacteriological standards

Santa Monica Bay Beaches Dry Weather Bacteria TMDL

Draft – January 10, 2002

1 Introduction

This document covers the required elements of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for bacteria at Santa Monica Bay beaches (SMB beaches) as well as providing a summary of some of the supporting technical analysis used in the development of the TMDL by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region (Regional Board). The goal of this TMDL is to determine and set forth measures needed to prevent impairment of water quality due to bacteria for SMB beaches.¹ This TMDL is based on extensive information from other entities concerning bacteriological water quality at SMB beaches as well as an intensive wet weather sampling and modeling effort undertaken specifically to support the development of this and other TMDLs.

The TMDL has been prepared pursuant to state and federal requirements to preserve and enhance water quality in Santa Monica Bay and for the benefit of the 55 million beachgoers that visit the SMB beaches each year (Los Angeles County Fire Department, Lifeguard Operations, 2001). At stake is the health of swimmers and surfers and sizeable revenues to the local economy. Visitors to SMB beaches spend approximately \$1.7 billion annually (Hanemann *et al.*, 2001).

What follows is a brief overview of the beaches included in this TMDL and the basis for their inclusion, the geographical setting, and the regulatory requirements for preparing this TMDL.

Santa Monica Bay is the major receiving water for one of the largest population centers in the United States. The principal geographic features that define its extent are Point Dume to the

¹ Bacteria can cause disease in and of itself, but is also used as an indicator of the likely presence of other disease-causing pathogens, such as viruses. Viruses are the principal agent of waterborne diseases throughout the world (National Research Council, 1999).

northwest and the Palos Verdes Peninsula to the southeast as depicted in Figure 1. For the purposes of this report, the Regional Board is concerned with the beaches from the Los Angeles/Ventura county line, to the northwest, to Outer Cabrillo Beach, just south of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. This area of concern covers approximately 55 miles of shoreline.

This TMDL includes 44 beaches along Santa Monica Bay. These beaches were listed on the state's 1998 303(d) list as impaired due to bacteria for two reasons – the total and/or fecal coliform water quality standards were exceeded based on shoreline monitoring data or there were one or more beach closures during the period assessed.

Fourteen of the 44 beaches on the 1998 303(d) list were listed due to exceedances of total and/or fecal coliform water quality standards (LARWQCB, 1996). (See Table 1 and Figures 2-4.) The assessment of these beaches was conducted during the 1996 regional water quality assessment (WQA). In the 1996 WQA, beaches were listed as impaired due to bacteria if, for the entire data set: (1) the fecal coliform standard of 400 organisms per 100 ml was exceeded in more than 15% of samples and/or (2) the total coliform standard of 10,000 organisms per 100 ml was exceeded in more than 20% of samples.²

In addition to the beaches above, four storm drains that discharge to SMB beaches are listed on the 1998 303(d) list as impaired due to coliform: Santa Monica Canyon; Ashland Avenue Drain; Sepulveda Canyon³ and Pico Kenter Drain.

In addition, 42 beaches are listed on the 1998 303(d) list as impaired due to beach closures (LARWQCB, 1996). (See Table 2 and Figures 5-7.) Twelve of these are listed for both beach

² It should be noted that while this was the assessment guideline used in 1996, the fecal coliform assessment guideline recommended by the U.S. EPA (1997) is that no more than 10% of samples should exceed the fecal coliform objective of 400 organisms per 100 ml. Furthermore, the Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California (California Ocean Plan) states that not more than 20% of samples shall exceed a density of 1,000 total coliform per 100 ml and that no single sample shall exceed a density of 10,000 total coliform per 100 ml. The 10% threshold is used in section 2.3 (below), which reviews more recent data to confirm water quality impairments due to bacteria.

³ Sepulveda Canyon is a "tributary" to Ballona Creek, and as such will be dealt with in detail as part of the Ballona Creek Bacteria TMDL.

closures and coliform as indicated by a “*” in Table 2.⁴ Nine more of these have been identified as exceeding water quality standards based on more recent data collected or analyzed by other entities, including the City of Los Angeles, Heal the Bay, and Santa Monica BayKeeper. These nine include: Nicholas Canyon Beach, Zuma Beach, Escondido Beach, Puerco Beach, Malibu Beach, Castlerock Beach, Hermosa Beach, Malaga Cove Beach, and Long Point. (See Table 2.)

The majority of beach closures are due to the release of inadequately treated sewage. Closures may also result from oil spills, vessel spills and persistent elevated bacteria densities.⁵ These beaches were originally listed in 1996 because there were one or more beach closures during the period assessed. Sewage spills are primarily addressed through enforcement actions such as Administrative Civil Liability (ACL) fines, Cease and Desist Orders (CDOs), and litigation.⁶

1.1 Geographical Setting

The Santa Monica Bay watershed is 1,072 km² (414 mi²) as shown in Figure 1 and has an estimated population of 1,950,265 based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Open space represents the primary land use in the watershed (55%), while high-density residential areas represent the largest developed area (25% of the total watershed). Low-density residential constitutes 5% of the land area. Commercial, industrial and mixed urban areas cover 10%. The remaining 5% of land area is covered by transportation (1.7%), educational institutions (1.6%), agriculture (0.8%), recreational uses (0.8%), public facilities and military installations (0.2%), and water (0.4%).

⁴ It should be noted that some of the beaches listed as impaired for beach closures do not have shoreline monitoring stations; therefore, they should be considered unassessed in terms of actual monitoring data. These include Robert H. Meyer Beach, Sea Level Beach, Point Dume Beach, Carbon Beach, La Costa Beach, Las Tunas Beach, and many of the beaches along the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

⁵ Beach postings on the other hand may result from routine monitoring that shows elevated bacteria densities at a particular sampling location.

⁶ For example, the Los Angeles Regional Board is a plaintiff in a lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles regarding sewage spills (*United States, et al. v. City of Los Angeles*, U.S.D.C. Cent. Dist. Cal., CV No. 01-00191).

While this provides an overview of the watershed as a whole, land use is in fact highly differentiated within the watershed. For the purposes of this TMDL, the Regional Board has divided the watershed into 28 subwatersheds. The two largest of these, the Malibu Creek and Ballona Creek subwatersheds, are further divided into 6 and 7 subdrainages, respectively. (Figure 1) Subwatersheds in the northern part of the Bay (northwest of Santa Monica subwatershed) have on average 85% of their land area in open space. Subwatersheds in the central and southern portion of the Bay (southeast of Santa Monica Canyon subwatershed) have on average 16% of their area in open space. (See Table 3 and Figures 8-10 for land use breakdowns by subwatershed.)

1.2 Regulatory Background

The California Water Quality Control Plan, Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan) sets water quality standards for the Los Angeles Region, which include beneficial uses for surface and ground water, numeric and narrative objectives necessary to support beneficial uses, and the state's antidegradation policy, and describes implementation programs to protect all waters in the region. The Basin Plan establishes water quality control plans and policies for the implementation of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act within the Los Angeles Region and, along with the Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California (California Ocean Plan), serves as the State Water Quality Control Plan applicable to Santa Monica Bay, as required pursuant to the federal Clean Water Act (CWA).

Section 303(d)(1)(A) of the CWA requires each state to conduct a biennial assessment of its waters, and identify those waters that are not achieving water quality standards. The resulting list is referred to as the 303(d) list. The CWA also requires states to establish a priority ranking for waters on the 303(d) list of impaired waters and to develop and implement TMDLs for these waters.

A TMDL specifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and allocates the acceptable pollutant load to point and nonpoint sources. The elements of a TMDL are described in 40 CFR 130.2 and 130.7 and section 303(d) of the CWA, as well as in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance

(U.S. EPA, 1991). By law, a TMDL is defined as the “sum of the individual waste load allocations for point sources and load allocations for nonpoint sources and natural background” (40 CFR 130.2) such that the capacity of the waterbody to assimilate pollutant loads (the Loading Capacity) is not exceeded. The Regional Board is also required to develop a TMDL taking into account seasonal variations and including a margin of safety to address uncertainty in the analysis (40 CFR 130.7(c)(1)). Finally, states must develop water quality management plans to implement the TMDL (40 CFR 130.6).

The U.S. EPA has oversight authority for the 303(d) program and is required to review and either approve or disapprove the state’s 303(d) list and each TMDL developed by the state. If the state fails to develop a TMDL in a timely manner or if the U.S. EPA disapproves a TMDL submitted by a state, EPA is required to establish a TMDL for that waterbody (40 CFR 130.7(d)(2)).

As part of its 1996 and 1998 regional water quality assessments, the Regional Board identified over 700 waterbody-pollutant combinations in the Los Angeles Region where TMDLs would be required (LARWQCB, 1996, 1998). A 13-year schedule for development of TMDLs in the Los Angeles Region was established in a consent decree (*Heal the Bay Inc., et al. v. Browner, et al.* C 98-4825 SBA) approved on March 22, 1999.

For the purpose of scheduling TMDL development, the decree combined the over 700 waterbody-pollutant combinations into 92 TMDL analytical units. Analytical unit 48 consists of beaches and key storm drains/channels to Santa Monica Bay with impairments related to pathogens. (The beaches included in TMDL analytical unit 48 are listed in Tables 1 and 2.) The consent decree also prescribed schedules for certain TMDLs, and according to this schedule, a bacteria TMDL for SMB beaches is to be adopted by March 2002.

2 Problem Identification

This section briefly discusses the health risks associated with swimming in ocean water contaminated with human sewage and other sources of pathogens. It is these risks to public health that the Regional Board intends to reduce through the development and

implementation of the TMDL. Second, the section describes the applicable water quality standards and provides background on their development. Finally, the section presents more recent data to support the original 303(d) listings made in 1996.

2.1 Health Risks of Swimming in Water Contaminated with Bacteria

Swimming in marine waters contaminated with human sewage has long been associated with adverse health effects (Favero, 1985). The most commonly observed health effect associated with recreational water use is gastroenteritis with symptoms including vomiting, fever, stomach pain and diarrhea. Other commonly reported health effects include eye, ear, and skin infections, and respiratory disease.

Since the 1950s, numerous epidemiological studies have been conducted around the world to investigate the possible links between swimming in fecal-contaminated waters and health risks. Recently, the World Health Organization completed a comprehensive review of 22 published epidemiological studies, 16 of which were conducted in marine waters (Pruss, 1998). Fourteen of the 16 marine water studies found a significant association between bacteria indicator densities and the rate of certain symptoms or groups of symptoms. Most significant associations were found for gastrointestinal illnesses. In a few studies, similar associations were found for respiratory, eye, ear, nose, throat, and skin symptoms. For marine waters, the bacteria indicators that correlated best with health effects were enterococci and fecal streptococci. Other indicators showing correlations were fecal coliform and staphylococci. The studies compel the conclusion that there is a causal relationship between gastrointestinal symptoms and recreational water quality, as measured by bacteria indicator densities.

2.1.1 Santa Monica Bay Epidemiological Study

One of the studies reviewed in Pruss (1998) was the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project epidemiological study conducted in 1995. This was the first epidemiological study to specifically evaluate the increased health risks to people who swam in marine waters contaminated by *urban runoff* (Haile, *et al.*, 1996, 1999). The results of the Santa Monica Bay study provided much of the basis for the current recreational water quality standards for marine waters in California (e.g., standards developed by the California Department of

Health Services in response to Assembly Bill 411 (1997 Stats. 765)). The study collected health effects data from 11,793 individuals visiting three SMB beaches, including Santa Monica Beach, Will Rogers State Beach, and Surfrider Beach. Bacteria indicators measured in the study included total coliform, fecal coliform, *E. coli*, and enterococcus.

The epidemiological study was unique in two ways. First, the source of bacteria was not effluent from a sewage treatment plant, but instead urban runoff discharged from storm drains. Second, the study compared people swimming near a flowing storm drain to other people swimming 400 meters away from the drain. Positive associations were observed between adverse health effects and the distance an individual swam from the drain. The number of excess cases of illness attributable to swimming at the drain reached into the hundreds per 10,000 exposed participants, suggesting that significant numbers of swimmers in the water near flowing storm drains are subject to increased health risks. In addition, an increased health risk was associated with increasing densities of bacteria.

2.2 Water Quality Standards

The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses for waterbodies in the Los Angeles Region. These uses are recognized as existing (E), potential (P), or intermittent (I) uses. All beneficial uses must be protected. SMB beaches have a variety of beneficial use designations including Navigation, Contact and Non-contact Recreation, Commercial and Sport Fishing, Marine Habitat, Wildlife Habitat, Spawning, Reproduction and/or Early Development, and Shellfish Harvesting. However, the focus of this TMDL is on the Water Contact Recreation (REC-1) beneficial use, which is designated as an existing use for all SMB beaches.⁷

The REC-1 beneficial use is defined in the Basin Plan as “[U]ses of water for recreational activities involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. These uses include, but are not limited to, swimming, wading, water-skiing, skin and scuba diving, surfing, white water activities, fishing, or use of natural hot springs” (Basin Plan, p. 2-2). The Basin Plan and the California Ocean Plan, the provisions of which are included in

the Basin Plan by reference, contain bacteria water quality objectives to protect the REC-1 use. In the current plans, total and fecal coliform bacteria are used as indicators of the likely presence of disease-causing pathogens in surface waters.

On October 25, 2001, the Regional Board adopted a Basin Plan amendment updating the bacteria objectives for waters designated as REC-1 (Regional Board Resolution 01-018, see Appendix A). The revised objectives include geometric mean limits and single sample limits for four bacterial indicators, including total coliform, fecal coliform, the fecal-to-total coliform ratio, and enterococcus.

The revised Basin Plan objectives for marine waters designated for Water Contact Recreation (REC-1) are as follows:

1. Geometric Mean Limits

- a. Total coliform density shall not exceed 1,000/100 ml.*
- b. Fecal coliform density shall not exceed 200/100 ml.*
- c. Enterococcus density shall not exceed 35/100 ml.*

2. Single Sample Limits

- a. Total coliform density shall not exceed 10,000/100 ml.*
- b. Fecal coliform density shall not exceed 400/100 ml.*
- c. Enterococcus density shall not exceed 104/100 ml.*
- d. Total coliform density shall not exceed 1,000/100 ml, if the ratio of fecal-to-total coliform exceeds 0.1.*

The revised objectives are consistent with current U.S. EPA guidance (1986), which recommends the use of enterococcus in marine water based on more recent epidemiological studies (LARWQCB, 2001; Cabelli, 1983). The revised objectives are also consistent with recent state law (California Code of Regulations, title 17, section 7958, which implements Assembly Bill 411 (1997 Stats. 765)), which was passed in large part due to the Santa Monica Bay epidemiological study described above. Assembly Bill 411 resulted in changes to California Department of Health Services' regulations for public beaches and public water

⁷ Protection of REC-1 (the water contact recreation use) will result in protection of REC-2 (the non-contact recreation use) as the water quality objective for fecal coliform to protect REC-2 is set at 10 times the REC-1 fecal coliform objective.

contact sports areas. These changes included (1) setting minimum protective bacteriological standards for waters adjacent to public beaches and public water contact sports areas based on four indicators (total coliform, fecal coliform, enterococcus, and the fecal-to-total coliform ratio) and (2) altering the requirements for monitoring, posting, and closing certain coastal beaches based on these four bacterial indicators. Finally, the changes are consistent with those being drafted for the California Ocean Plan (Linda O'Connell, State Water Resources Control Board, personal communication). See Table 4 for the revised water quality objectives for protection of marine waters designated as REC-1 adopted by the Regional Board on October 25, 2001.

2.3 Data Review

Santa Monica Bay beaches are some of the most comprehensively and intensively monitored in the nation. Four agencies contribute to this wealth of data. The City of Los Angeles Environmental Monitoring Division at the Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant (Hyperion) monitors 20 locations on a daily basis; the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services monitors 33 locations on a weekly basis; and the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (CSDLAC) monitors eight locations, six daily and two weekly. Approximately one-third of these locations are 25 to 50 yards upcoast or downcoast of the mouth of a storm drain or creek.

Analysis of these data has consistently shown that bacteria densities at many SMB beaches exceed REC-1 bacteria objectives during both dry and wet weather. In the 1996 WQA, the Regional Board evaluated total and fecal coliform monitoring data collected between 1988 and 1994 by the agencies listed above to determine whether a beach was impaired due to exceedances of the existing water quality objectives. The 1996 WQA supported the conclusion that many SMB beaches exceed the REC-1 bacteria objectives.

More recent shoreline monitoring data (1996-2001) collected by the City of Los Angeles, Environmental Monitoring Division, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, and analyzed by Heal the Bay, is summarized in Table 5 and confirms many of the listing decisions made in 1996. On average, during wet weather, 43 of the 56 shoreline locations monitored exceeded at least one

indicator more than 10% of sample days per year.⁸ During the winter months (November through March), but excluding wet weather, this number drops to 16 of 56 locations. Finally, during summer months (April through October), only seven sites exceeded the standards more than 10% of sample days – Surfrider (two locations), Malibu Pier, Big Rock Beach, Santa Monica Canyon, Santa Monica Pier and Ashland storm drain.

In addition to the above analysis, several other entities have collected and analyzed shoreline bacteriological monitoring data for SMB beaches. First, Heal the Bay compiles and analyzes data collected by local health agencies throughout Southern California. It publishes its results monthly on the Internet and in an annual Beach Report Card (BRC). The BRC assigns each beach a grade from A to F, taking into consideration the frequency and magnitude of indicator threshold exceedances over a 28-day period.⁹ Table 6 summarizes the annual BRC grades for SMB beaches for the period April 2000 through March 2001. The 2000-01 BRC also confirms the findings of the Regional Board’s 1996 WQA with some additions. Specifically, beaches not listed as impaired due to coliform in the 1996 WQA, but which received an annual BRC grade of “C” or worse include: Nicholas Canyon, Zuma, Puerco, Malibu Pier, Hermosa Pier, Malaga Cove, and Long Point.

Second, two dry-weather assessments of shoreline bacterial water quality have been conducted by the City of Los Angeles and Heal the Bay at selected storm drains since the 1996 WQA. In both studies, samples were taken in the storm drain, the “mixing zone”¹⁰ and at various distances from the storm drain. The results presented in Table 7 are for samples collected in the mixing zone. All locations exceeded at least one single sample objective in more than 10% of mixing zone samples, while seven of 10 locations exceeded all three single

⁸ In this analysis and throughout the TMDL, wet weather days were defined as those with rainfall of 0.1 inch or more plus the 3 days following the rain event following the protocol used by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services to post beaches during and after a rain event.

⁹ The indicator thresholds used in the BRC are the same as those recently adopted by the Regional Board for marine waters designated as REC-1 and those proposed as targets in the TMDL, which include total coliform, fecal coliform, enterococcus, and a fecal-to-total coliform ratio.

¹⁰ The mixing zone is the volume of water into which the storm drain or creek empties and the effluent from the storm drain initially mixes with the receiving water. In the context of this TMDL, the mixing zone is the point at which the TMDL numeric targets will apply and is the same as “point zero” and the “wave wash” described in section 3 (below).

sample objectives (total coliform, fecal coliform, and enterococcus) in more than 10% of samples.

Finally, in support of the TMDL, the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) conducted a 5-year (1995-99) retrospective evaluation of shoreline bacteria data (SCCWRP, 2001). Rather than examining the percentage of samples that exceeded the water quality objectives for a particular monitoring location, SCCWRP analyzed the percentage of shoreline mile-days that exceeded water quality objectives.¹¹ It should be noted that while examining exceedances in terms of shoreline mile-days provides insight into the frequency of exceedances, it does not shed light on the magnitude of exceedances.

SCCWRP's evaluation reached several conclusions about the nature of bacteria contamination along beaches. First, SCCWRP found that only 13% of shoreline mile-days exceeded bacteria objectives during the 5-year period. This result highlights the fact that during dry weather most beaches do not exceed water quality standards. Second, SCCWRP found that although rainstorms are relatively infrequent in Southern California, the extent of water quality exceedances during and immediately following wet weather was similar to that of dry weather. Only one-quarter of the samples were collected during wet weather, but approximately 40% of fecal coliform exceedances, 50% of enterococcus exceedances, and 65% of total coliform exceedances occurred during wet weather.

¹¹ Shoreline mile-days are calculated as follows:

$$SMD = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n s_i \times d_i \times 200}{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i \times 200}$$

Where:

SMD = proportion of shoreline mile-days that exceed a water quality threshold for a stratum (i.e., storm drain, open beach)

s_i = samples that exceed water quality threshold for indicator *y* (i.e., fecal coliform) for strata *i*

d_i = temporal weighting equivalent to the number of days until the next sampling event in strata *i*

200 = shoreline distance weighting (in meters)

The water quality objectives used in the evaluation are the single sample objectives recently adopted by the Regional Board and proposed as the numeric targets in the TMDL.

SCCWRP's analysis also enables the Regional Board to rank sites, and groups of sites, in terms of their relative contribution to the total number of shoreline mile-days that exceed the bacteria objectives. For both wet and dry weather, 53% of exceedances occurred near storm drains, while 40% occurred on sandy beaches. (It should be noted that the influence of storm drains may have been underestimated in the analysis, since sampling sites are located 50 meters north or south of storm drains and water quality impairments may have occurred at less than 50 meters.¹²)

Five freshwater outlets/storm drains (Malibu Creek, Santa Monica Pier, Santa Monica Canyon, Pico-Kenter, and Topanga Point) accounted for over half of the drain-related exceedances during dry weather. Exceedances were more evenly spread across storm drain-impacted beaches during wet weather. For open beach sites, the top five most contaminated sites (Surfrider, Malibu Pier, Big Rock Beach, Las Flores Beach, and Paradise Cove) accounted for 37% of exceedances during dry weather, but only 27% of exceedances in wet weather. See Appendix B for the complete retrospective evaluation published in SCCWRP's 2000-01 Annual Report.

In summary, most of the monitored beaches in Santa Monica Bay have been identified by the Regional Board in its 1996 WQA or more recently by other entities as impaired due to exceedances of bacteriological water quality standards.

3 Numeric Target

The TMDL will have a multi-part numeric target based on the bacteria objectives for marine waters designated for contact recreation (REC-1), specified in the Basin Plan amendment adopted by the Regional Board on October 25, 2001. As stated earlier, these objectives are consistent with those specified in the California Code of Regulations, title 17, section 7958 "Bacteriological Standards" and "Ambient Water Quality for Bacteria – 1986" (U.S. EPA,

¹² A recent Southern California Bight-wide summer shoreline bacteriological survey showed that 90% of all exceedances of health standards observed during the 5-week study occurred near a flowing storm drain (Noble *et al.* 1999).

1986). The objectives include four bacterial indicators: total coliform, fecal coliform, enterococcus, and the fecal-to-total coliform ratio. (See Table 4.)

For the TMDL, the numeric targets will be the same as the recently adopted Basin Plan objectives, as measured at point zero (also referred to as the “mixing zone” or “wave wash”).¹³ For beaches without freshwater outlets (i.e., storm drains or coastal creeks), the targets will apply at existing or new monitoring sites, with samples taken at ankle depth. These targets apply during both dry and wet weather, since there is water contact recreation throughout the year, including during wet weather, at the beaches. The geometric mean targets are based on a rolling 30-day period, and may not be exceeded at any time.

For the single sample targets, the Regional Board has chosen to set an allowable number of exceedance days for each shoreline monitoring site based on one of two criteria. The two criteria require that: (1) bacteriological water quality at any site is *at least* as good as at a designated reference site and (2) there is no degradation of existing shoreline bacteriological water quality if historical water quality at a particular site is *better than* the designated reference site. Applying these two criteria allows the Regional Board to avoid imposing requirements to treat natural sources of bacteria from undeveloped areas. Based on these criteria, no exceedances will be allowed during summer dry weather (April 1 to October 31).¹⁴ This approach, including the allowable exceedance levels during winter dry weather, is further explained in section 7, Waste load allocations.

¹³ Point zero is the point at which water from the storm drain or creek initially mixes with ocean water. Point zero has been selected as the compliance point for the numeric target because access to these drains is, on the whole, not restricted, with the exception of efforts by lifeguards to prevent beach goers from swimming in or adjacent to a storm drain. People are often observed swimming near storm drains, and in addition, children are often observed wading in the storm water flowing across the beach. (See Figure 11.)

¹⁴ This is further supported by the fact that the California Department of Health Services has established minimum protective bacteriological standards – the same as the numeric targets proposed in this TMDL – which when exceeded during the period April 1 to October 31 are used to post beaches with health hazard warnings (California Code of Regulations, title 17, section 7958). In order to fully protect public health and prevent beach postings during this period, staff does not intend to change the zero (0) exceedance days during summer dry weather (April 1 to October 31).

4 Assessing Sources

The TMDL requires an estimate of loadings from point sources and nonpoint sources. In the TMDL process waste load allocations are given for point sources and load allocations for nonpoint sources. Point sources typically include discharges from a discrete human-engineered point (e.g., a pipe from a wastewater treatment plant or industrial facility). These types of discharges are regulated through a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, typically issued in the form of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) issued by the Regional Board.

Nonpoint source by definition includes pollutants that reach waters from a number of diffuse sources. However, the regulatory distinction between point and nonpoint sources is blurred in the Los Angeles Region. This is because urban runoff to Santa Monica Bay is regulated under two storm water NPDES permits. The first is the Los Angeles County Municipal Storm Water NPDES Permit, which was renewed in 1996 and is currently in the process of being updated. There are 86 co-permittees covered under this permit including 85 cities and the County of Los Angeles. The second is a separate storm water permit specifically for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

In general, sources of elevated bacteria to marine waters include sanitary sewer and sewage plant overflows and spills, illegal discharges from boats, malfunctioning septic tanks, illicit discharges from private drains, and urban runoff discharged from publicly owned storm drain systems. Urban runoff from the storm drain system may have elevated levels of bacterial indicators due to sanitary sewer leaks and spills, illicit connections of sanitary lines to the storm drain system, runoff from homeless encampments, illegal discharges from recreational vehicle holding tanks, and malfunctioning septic tanks among other things. Swimmers can also be a direct source of bacteria to recreational waters. The bacteria indicators used to assess water quality are not specific to human sewage; therefore, fecal matter from animals and birds can also be a source of elevated levels of bacteria, and vegetation and food waste can be a source of elevated levels of total coliform bacteria, specifically.

4.1 Point Sources

There are seven major NPDES permit discharges in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed. Three are Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) (two with direct ocean discharges), one is a refinery, and three are electricity generating stations. The three POTWs are Hyperion Treatment Plant, Joint Water Pollution Control Plant, and Tapia Wastewater Reclamation Plant. In light of their operations, the refinery and the three generating stations are not considered probable sources of bacteria.

Hyperion is a full secondary treatment plant with a dry weather design capacity of 450 MGD and wet weather peak hydraulic capacity of 850 MGD. The treated wastewater from Hyperion discharges through a 5-mile outfall pipe into Santa Monica Bay. Hyperion discharges approximately 360 MGD to the Bay during dry weather. As part of its permitted operations, Hyperion measures physical, chemical and microbiological parameters at an array of 11 inshore locations five times per month to determine whether the effluent plume reaches the shore. In its 1997-98 Santa Monica Bay Biennial Assessment Report, the City concludes that bacteria loads from Hyperion are not impacting the shoreline. Inshore stations showed 100% compliance with bacteriological receiving water limits with the exception of a few stations in the vicinity of Ballona Creek and Marina del Rey and King Harbor, which may be impacted by boat activity, birds, harbor runoff, and flow from Ballona Creek. (CLA-EMD, 1999).

The Joint Water Pollution Control Plant (Joint Plant) is a partial secondary treatment plant with a design capacity of 385 MGD. Treated wastewater from the Joint Plant discharges through an approximately 2 mile-long outfall network onto the Palos Verdes Shelf. The Joint Plant discharges 334 MGD to the Bay, and continuously disinfects its discharge. The Joint Plant measures total coliform, fecal coliform, and enterococcus at its two main outfalls as well as at six inshore stations located near the 9-meter isobath. In 2000, the inshore stations monitored by the Joint Plant consistently met REC-1 bacteriological water quality objectives. In addition, the Joint Plant Annual Monitoring Report for 2000 shows that the monthly geometric mean densities of total coliform, fecal coliform and enterococcus from the two outfalls are consistently low (CSDLAC, 2001).

The Tapia Wastewater Reclamation Plant is a tertiary treatment plant with a design capacity of 16.1 MGD. It discharges approximately 8-10 MGD to Malibu Creek during the winter season only (November 16 to April 16).¹⁵ Tapia also disinfects before discharging to Malibu Creek. Tapia's 1999 Annual Report indicates that total coliform is less than 1.1 MPN/100 ml based on monthly monitoring of the effluent discharged to Malibu Creek (LVMWD, 1999).

There are 21 minor NPDES permitted discharges in the Santa Monica Bay watershed. In addition, there are numerous discharges covered under general permits or industrial and construction storm water permits. The bacteria loads associated with these dischargers are largely unknown. Most do not monitor for bacteria. The discharge flows associated with these permits are generally low. In addition, many of these permits are for episodic discharges rather than continuous flows. Rather than attempt to compile the data from all the minor NPDES permits, general permits, and industrial and construction storm water permits in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed, the Regional Board assumes that bacteria loadings from these point source discharges will be accounted for in the watershed-wide assessment of nonpoint source loadings, discussed below.

4.2 Nonpoint Sources

As mentioned above, urban runoff to Santa Monica Bay is primarily regulated as a point source under the Los Angeles County Municipal Storm Water NPDES Permit (LA County MS4 Permit) and the Caltrans Storm Water Permit. However, because of the nature of urban runoff, it is discussed in this section.

4.2.1 Existing Data Characterizing Sources

The following section summarizes existing data on bacteria densities for a variety of land uses and receiving water sites for dry and wet weather. Despite an intensive shoreline bacteriological monitoring program, there is little routine monitoring in the subwatersheds draining to the impaired beaches. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the

¹⁵ Based on data from 1996-2000.

lead permittee for the existing municipal storm water permit,¹⁶ conducts a storm water monitoring program, which is the principal source of data on water quality during wet weather.

Additional data for Ballona Creek is collected by the City of Los Angeles, Environmental Monitoring Division and for Malibu Creek by the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District. In addition, there are several volunteer monitoring groups that collect data on a regular basis. Volunteer sampling programs usually focus on dry weather due to the difficulties associated with mobilizing volunteers on short notice to sample during a storm. Finally, several agencies have conducted “snapshot” surveys of water quality at key storm drains/freshwater outlets draining to the Bay.

Summaries of data on dry weather sources of bacteria, and then wet weather sources are presented below.

4.2.2 Dry Weather Source Characterization

Many of the canyon creeks and storm drains to Santa Monica Bay flow during both wet and dry weather. Dry weather flows are not directly attributable to precipitation, but rather to natural springs, over-irrigation of lawns, and other activities in the watershed. Dry weather flows and associated pollutant loads are not well documented in the Santa Monica Bay watershed, and to accurately describe them would require a detailed sanitary survey of each subwatershed. Such detailed surveys were outside the initial scope of the TMDL development; however, staff identified several sources of data characterizing bacteria densities during dry weather in Ballona Creek, Malibu Creek, and major storm drains that empty to the Bay.

Tables 8 through 10 summarize these data sets. Table 8 is a summary of data for 13 major storm drains discharging to Santa Monica Bay, collected by the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, and Heal the Bay between 1998-2001. Ten of the 13 drains exceeded the

¹⁶ In the draft permit under consideration by the Regional Board at the time this report was prepared, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District is named the principal permittee.

single sample total coliform objective in more than 50% of samples. All 13 exceeded the single sample fecal coliform objective in more than 50% of samples, and 11 of 13 exceeded the single sample enterococcus objective in more than 50% of samples.

Table 9 is a summary of data for Ballona Creek, collected by the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, and Santa Monica BayKeeper. Again, overall the data show that the total coliform, fecal coliform, and enterococcus single sample objectives are exceeded frequently and by a significant amount.

Table 10 is a summary of data for Malibu Creek and Lagoon, collected by Los Angeles County and Heal the Bay. Data collected by Heal the Bay indicate that the single sample objective for total coliform is exceeded in 31% of samples, for fecal coliform in 85% of samples, and for enterococcus in 23% of samples.

In addition to the above sources of data, the City of Los Angeles conducted a one-time dry weather sanitary survey in Temescal (Pulga) Canyon (see Figure 3), sampling ten locations from September to October 2000. The City found that almost all locations exceeded the REC-1 single sample bacteria objectives. Specifically, 80% of samples exceeded the total coliform objective and/or the enterococcus objective. (The City also tested for *E. coli*; 74% of samples exceeded the *freshwater* single sample objective of 235 organisms per 100 ml.¹⁷)

Finally, the BeachKeeper volunteer monitoring program administered by the Santa Monica BayKeeper takes quarterly samples from up to 342 coastal drains from Point Dume to Malaga Cove with the potential to discharge to the beach, including private drains, large publicly-maintained storm drains, and creeks such as Malibu, Topanga, and Escondido. Their results show that during dry weather half of the samples from these coastal drains and creeks exceeded the marine single sample objective of 10,000 total coliform per 100 ml (104 out of 203 samples, or 51.2%) and the freshwater single sample objective of 235 *E. coli* per 100 ml

¹⁷ There is no marine water quality objective for *E. coli*.

(109 out of 207 samples, or 52.7%) for the period 1999 to 2001 (Santa Monica BayKeeper, unpublished data).¹⁸

5 Linkage Analysis

Based on the retrospective evaluation of shoreline monitoring data discussed in section 2.3 and source analysis presented in section 4.2.2, staff has concluded that, with the exception of isolated sewage spills, dry weather urban runoff conveyed by storm drains and creeks is the primary source of elevated bacterial indicator densities to SMB beaches during dry weather. Limited natural runoff and groundwater sources may also potentially contribute to elevated bacterial indicator densities during winter dry weather. This is supported by the finding that historical monitoring data from the reference beach (discussed in detail in section 7) indicate no exceedances of the single sample targets during summer dry weather and on average only three percent exceedance during winter dry weather. Studies show that bacterial degradation and dilution during transport from the watershed to the beach do not significantly affect bacterial indicator densities at SMB beaches (see Appendices E and F). Therefore, the loading capacity is defined in terms of bacterial indicator densities and is equivalent to the numeric targets in section 3.

5.1 Critical Condition

The critical condition in a TMDL defines an extreme condition for the purpose of setting waste load allocations to meet the TMDL numeric target. While a separate element of the TMDL, it may be thought of as an additional margin of safety such that the waste load allocations are set to meet the numeric target during an extreme (or above average) condition.¹⁹

The critical period for this dry weather bacteria TMDL is during winter months, when historic shoreline monitoring data for the reference beach indicate that the single sample bacteria objectives are exceeded on average 3% of the dry weather days sampled. (See

¹⁸ See Appendix C for a complete list of these drains/freshwater outlets, as compiled by Santa Monica BayKeeper. Only a small number of these (perhaps 3 dozen) are large systems. Fewer still are among those currently proposed for diversion during low flows.

section 7.3.1, Exceedance criteria for dry weather.) The reason for this is believed to be the result of winter rains, which raise the groundwater table. The higher groundwater tables continue to discharge to freshwater creeks for some time after the rains.

The number of allowable exceedances during winter dry weather is based on a percentage (3%) of dry weather days assumed for the reference year. Staff selected the 10th percentile year in terms of non-rain days as the reference year based on an evaluation of rainfall data at LAX from 1947-2000 (see Appendix D for annual rainfall data at the LAX meteorological station). The 10th percentile year in terms of number of non-rain days was 1993. In 1993, there were 122 days with less than 0.1 inch of rain. Selecting the 10th percentile year to set the allowable number of winter dry weather exceedance days is a conservative approach because in nine years out of ten there will be more non-rain days than in the reference year, which increases the opportunity for a greater number of exceedance days.

6 Margin of Safety

Waste load allocations (WLAs) of zero (0) days of exceedance during summer dry weather (described in section 7) include an implicit margin of safety. The WLAs for winter dry weather are based on historic shoreline data, which staff believes to be conservative because samples from the reference beach and other locations were taken up to 50 yards downcurrent from the storm drain outfall or freshwater creek. Findings from a bacterial dispersion study of selected freshwater outlets show that there is typically significant dilution between the freshwater outlet, the wave wash (the compliance point), and a point 50 yards downcurrent.

7 Waste Load Allocations

Waste load allocations in this TMDL are expressed in a unique way. Waste load allocations are expressed as the number of sample days at a shoreline monitoring site that may exceed the single sample targets identified in section 3. For each shoreline monitoring site and corresponding subwatershed, allowable exceedance levels are set on an annual basis as well as for three other time periods. These three periods are: (1) summer dry weather (April 1 to

¹⁹ Critical conditions are often defined in terms of flow, such as the seven-day-ten-year low flow (7Q10), but may also be defined in terms of rainfall amount, days of measurable rain, etc.

October 31), (2) winter dry weather (November 1 to March 31), and (3) wet weather (days of 0.1 inch of rain or more plus three days following the rain event). Wet weather allowable exceedance levels and annual allowable exceedance levels will be set in a separate TMDL (i.e., SMB Beaches Wet Weather Bacteria TMDL). A joint WLA is given to LA County MS4 permittees and Caltrans for each shoreline monitoring location and for each of the two compliance periods (summer dry weather and winter dry weather). All WLAs for summer dry weather are zero (0) exceedance days. WLAs for winter dry weather vary by location from a maximum of four exceedance days to zero (0) exceedance days based on the method described below. As discussed in section 4.1, the three POTWs have demonstrated the ability to comply with bacteriological receiving water limits and, therefore, are each assigned WLAs of zero (0) exceedance days for both compliance periods.

**7.1 Why waste load allocations are defined as allowable exceedance days:
The role of natural subwatersheds**

The bacteria indicators used to assess water quality are not specific to human sewage. Fecal matter from wildlife and birds can be a source of elevated levels of bacteria, and vegetation can be a source of elevated levels of total coliform bacteria, specifically.

As discussed in section 1.1, subwatersheds in the northern part of the Bay have on average 85% of their land area in open space. (See Figures 8 and 9.) It is not the intent of this TMDL to require diversion of natural coastal creeks or to require treatment of natural sources of bacteria from undeveloped areas. Therefore, the approach staff has chosen is to define reference subwatershed(s) and beach(es) within Santa Monica Bay, which can then be used to set the allowable number of exceedance days. Arroyo Sequit Canyon and the beach to which it drains, Leo Carrillo Beach, have been selected as the reference system.²⁰ This system was selected for three reasons: (1) Arroyo Sequit is the most undeveloped subwatershed in the Santa Monica Bay watershed, (2) there is a freshwater outlet (creek), which drains to the beach, and (3) staff have historical shoreline monitoring data for this system.

²⁰ Arroyo Sequit Canyon is approximately 12 square miles in size and has the highest percentage of land area in open space (98%) in comparison to all other subwatersheds in Santa Monica Bay.

7.2 Two methods for measuring exceedance days: The role of modeling and shoreline monitoring data

Staff have used two methods to determine the number of days that exceed the single sample objectives at various shoreline locations. The first method is the water quality model described in the Wet Weather Bacteria TMDL. The second method is a site-by-site evaluation of historical shoreline bacteriological monitoring data for the 5-year period 1996-2000. Only the second method is applicable for estimating dry weather days of exceedance.

7.2.1 Historical shoreline bacteriological data method

Under this method, staff used the most recent five years of shoreline monitoring data (1996-2000) to determine the average percent exceedance for each shoreline monitoring site.²¹ This was calculated for each of the three time periods of concern (i.e., summer dry weather, winter dry weather, and wet weather).²² There are two important distinctions between the measured exceedance days under this method as compared to Method I (the water quality model). First, shoreline monitoring sites are typically located 50 yards upcoast or downcoast of a storm drain or creek. The shoreline compliance point set for this TMDL is the “wave wash” or “point zero” rather than 50 yards away. Therefore, it is likely that historical shoreline monitoring data *under-estimates* the average percent exceedance that would be observed at a beach if the sample were collected from the wave wash. Second, an average percent exceedance value is calculated for each shoreline monitoring site, rather than for a subwatershed. In some cases, one subwatershed is the drainage area for multiple shoreline monitoring sites. (See Figure 3, for example.)

7.3 Criteria for determining allowable exceedance days: The role of the reference system and antidegradation

Staff has chosen to set the number of allowable exceedance days for each beach to ensure that (1) shoreline bacteriological water quality is at least as good as that of a largely undeveloped system and (2) there is no degradation of existing shoreline bacteriological

²¹ Only four years of data (1997-2000) were available for the County Sanitation Districts’ sites on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

water quality. The selected approach prevents the undesirable result of requiring natural sources of bacteria from undeveloped areas to be treated. Staff achieves this result by using the smaller of two measurements of exceedance days. These are: (1) exceedance days in the reference system, or (2) exceedance days based on historical bacteriological data at a particular shoreline monitoring site. In other words, if the number of dry-weather or wet-weather exceedance days in the reference system surpasses historical levels at another shoreline monitoring site, then the historical levels at the other site will apply to that particular site (i.e., the site-specific historical exceedance levels would override the “default” exceedance levels of the reference system). Below are discussions of the criteria used to consider allowable dry weather exceedances.

7.3.1 Exceedance criteria for dry weather

For dry weather, staff again used one of two criteria: (1) exceedance days in the reference system or (2) exceedance days as measured by historical bacteriological data at a particular site.

Historical data for Leo Carrillo Beach show no exceedances during summer dry weather (April 1 to October 31) and on average 3% exceedance during winter dry weather. Therefore, the reference system criterion is 0% exceedance days for summer dry weather and 3% exceedance (or four days under a daily sampling regime) during winter dry weather.²³

The second criterion is the exceedance level as measured by historical bacteriological data for a particular shoreline monitoring site.

²² Wet weather was defined as those days with 0.1 inch of rain or more, and the three days following the rain event. This definition is the same as that used by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services for rain-related beach postings.

²³ Again, we extrapolated from the 5-year average percent exceedance to an estimated number of exceedance days during winter dry weather by using rainfall data for 1993. There are 151 days from November 1 to March 31. Subtracting from this the 29 wet-weather days leaves 122 winter dry-weather days. Staff recognizes that the number of winter dry weather days will change from year to year and, therefore, 3% of dry weather days will not always equate to 4 days. However, staff is setting the allowable number of exceedance days based on the reference year, rather than allowing the number to float based on the number of wet and dry days in a particular year.

Again, remember that the smaller of these two criteria (or exceedance-day measurements) holds for dry weather. For summer dry weather this is very straightforward – no exceedances are allowed at any site, since 5 years of historical data for Leo Carrillo Beach, the reference beach, show no exceedances during this period.²⁴ For winter dry weather, look at Table 11, if a shoreline monitoring site exceeded the single sample objectives more than four days under a daily sampling regime (or 3% of the time) during winter dry weather, the “Winter Dry Weather Daily Sampling” column was re-set to four days and the “Winter Dry Weather Weekly Sampling” column was re-set to one day. If a site exceeded four days or less based on a daily sampling regime (or 3% of the time) during winter dry weather, the two columns were left unchanged. That is, the exceedance days remain the same as the historical 5-year average exceedance level for that particular shoreline monitoring site. In Table 12, staff presents the site-by-site 5-year average percent exceedance for winter dry weather and the corresponding required reduction in winter dry weather exceedance days for daily sampling regimes.

7.4 Future growth

Potential growth is implicitly addressed, since the numeric targets are based on bacteria density and the number of allowable exceedance days, not a total load. The actual reductions in the number of days necessary to meet this target may change based on growth; however, the final compliance target will remain the same.

7.5 Re-evaluating allowable exceedance levels and interim compliance

Due to shortcomings of the historic shoreline monitoring data method described above, the Regional Board intends to re-open the TMDL three years after adoption to re-evaluate the allowable winter dry weather exceedance levels defined above.

²⁴ The WLA of zero (0) exceedance days is further supported by the fact that the California Department of Health Services has established minimum protective bacteriological standards – the same as the numeric targets proposed in this TMDL – which, when exceeded during the period April 1 to October 31, are used to post beaches with health hazard warnings (California Code of Regulations, title 17, section 7958). In order to fully protect public health and prevent beach postings during this period, staff does not intend to change the zero (0) exceedance days during summer dry weather (April 1 to October 31).

For the historical shoreline bacteriological data method, where there is a freshwater outlet (drain or creek) that reaches the surf zone during wet weather, shoreline monitoring stations will need to be placed (or re-located) at the “wave wash” (the compliance point for the TMDL). As stated earlier, many shoreline monitoring locations are currently located 50 yards upcoast or downcoast of a storm drain or creek. Once the Regional Board has several years of shoreline monitoring data from the “wave wash,” the Regional Board will re-open the TMDL and revise as necessary the average percentage of exceedance days during winter dry weather for both the reference system(s) and each individual beach monitoring location.

Until the TMDL is re-opened, the allowable number of winter dry weather exceedance days will remain as presented in Table 11. Re-opening the TMDL will not create a conflict in the interim, since the TMDL does not require compliance during winter dry weather until six years after the effective date of the TMDL. Therefore, the TMDL will be re-opened and the allowable exceedance levels for winter dry weather will be revised as necessary before the compliance deadline.

8 Implementation

8.1 Regulatory Mechanisms

As required by the Clean Water Act, discharges of pollutants to Santa Monica Bay from storm water are prohibited, unless the discharges are in compliance with a NPDES permit. In June 1990, the Regional Board’s first Municipal NPDES Storm Water Permit was issued jointly to Los Angeles County and 85 cities as co-permittees. The Los Angeles County Municipal Storm Water NPDES Permit and the Caltrans Storm Water Permit will be key implementation tools for this TMDL. Because bacteria is primarily considered a storm water contaminant, the numeric targets presented in this TMDL will be incorporated as effluent limits in future storm water permits, which will be modified in order to address implementation and monitoring of this TMDL.

Discharges of waste that may affect the quality of the waters of the region must file a Report of Waste Discharge (ROWD) and obtain the appropriate discharge permits. Santa Monica BayKeeper has identified 342 potential discharges to the shore between Malaga Cove and

Point Dume. Ten to 12 of these are natural creeks or washes; the status of the remaining 330 to 332 discharges is unknown at this time. Within 120 days of the effective date of this TMDL, ROWDs must be filed for these discharges if they have not been already individually reported or if the discharges are not already regulated by the Los Angeles County Municipal Storm Water NPDES Permit or Caltrans Storm Water Permit.

Finally, per the California Ocean Plan, no discharge of waste to an Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) is allowed. In the Santa Monica Bay watershed, the area from Latigo Point to Point Mugu (beyond the County line) is designated an ASBS. Therefore, no discharge of waste to the shore is allowed in this region. Santa Monica BayKeeper has identified 271 potential waste discharges to the shore in this area; the status of these is unknown at this time. Within 120 days of the effective date of this TMDL, these discharges must be identified and all illegal discharges eliminated.

8.2 Phased Implementation Schedule

The general implementation schedule includes two phases and is summarized in Table 13.

Phase I: Compliance during Summer Dry Weather. Within three years of the effective date of this TMDL, there may be no exceedances at any location during summer dry weather (April 1 to October 31). This compliance target may be achieved by employing one or more strategies in Table 13 or by any other viable strategies, including diverting storm drain flows to treatment plants (where possible); eliminating illicit discharges; controlling sources of bacteria (including groundwater sources); or implementing “end-of-pipe” treatment. The County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles and several other cities adjacent to Santa Monica Bay are well on the way to achieving this goal through aggressive summer, dry-weather storm drain diversion programs. Thus far 11 of 27 major storm drains have been diverted and funding is secured for another six to be diverted. This leaves only 10 major drains discharging to Santa Monica Bay beaches during dry weather from April 1 to October 31.

Phase II: Compliance during Winter Dry Weather. Within six years of the effective date of this TMDL, compliance with the allowable number of exceedance days during winter dry weather must be achieved. (See Table 11.) This compliance target may be achieved by employing one or more strategies in Table 13 or by any other viable strategies, including diverting dry weather storm drain flows to treatment plants year-round, where possible.

Each permittee or group of permittees along with other responsible agencies within a subwatershed may decide how to achieve the necessary reductions in number of days of exceedance at each shoreline location by employing one or more of the strategies listed in Table 13. In many cases there are multiple incorporated and unincorporated areas and responsible agencies within a subwatershed; therefore, all jurisdictions and responsible agencies within a subwatershed are jointly responsible for achieving the necessary reductions in days of exceedance. See Appendix G for responsible jurisdictions by subwatershed. If a storm drain has been diverted at a particular shoreline monitoring location, responsibility for any continued exceedances will fall to the adjacent municipality, County agency(ies), or State agency(ies). Staff expects that after an additional year or two of sampling, the source characterization study and model results will assist municipalities in focusing their implementation efforts.

8.3 Implementation Approach

As mentioned earlier, the necessary reductions in the number of days of exceedance must be achieved in the wave wash or at ankle depth for “open beach” monitoring stations (i.e., monitoring stations located away from any storm drain or coastal creek). This means that cities, or groups of cities/permittees, will be required to meet the total reduction in the subwatershed associated with the shoreline monitoring station, not necessarily an allocation for their municipality or for specific land uses. Clearly the focus should be on developed areas or areas with significant human use (i.e., open space heavily used for recreation). Flexibility will be allowed in determining how to reduce bacteria densities as long as the required allocations are achieved in the wave wash or at ankle depth.

8.4 Cost Considerations

To estimate the cost of implementing the TMDL, staff has compiled (1) the capital costs of diverting the remaining 10 major storm drains and the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs of diverting all the major storm drains entering Santa Monica Bay during the period from April 1 to October 31, (2) the additional O&M costs to divert the 27 major storm drains during dry weather throughout the year, and (3) the cost to address dry weather runoff from natural creeks.. The costs for beaches drained by the Malibu Creek watershed and Ballona Creek watershed are not addressed below, as there are separate TMDLs for bacteria for these two systems. As such, cost considerations will be considered in the individual bacteria TMDLs for these two systems.

8.4.1 Dry Weather Treatment Costs

The total estimated costs for low-flow diversion of the 27 major storm drains entering Santa Monica Bay during the period April 1 to October 31 are as follows. These costs are based on a report prepared by the City of Los Angeles (2001), discussions with staff at the City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation, and proposals submitted to the Regional Board and Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project under the Clean Beaches Initiative and Proposition 12. The annualized capital cost to construct the remaining 10 low-flow diversions is estimated at \$717,386, assuming financing for 20 years at 7 percent. The operation and maintenance costs during the period from April 1 to October 31 for all 27 diversions are estimated at approximately \$1.7 million. (See Table 14.) For households in the SMB watershed, this translates into an annual cost of \$3.23.²⁵

The total estimated costs for diverting the 27 major storm drains during dry weather from November 1 to March 31 are as follows. If charged, the one-time sewer facility charge to pay for capacity in the sewer system is estimated at approximately \$28 million (or \$2.65 million in annualized costs). The annual operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$872,841.

²⁵ Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, there are approximately 744,376 households in the SMB watershed. (This was derived based on the total population in the watershed (1,950,265) and the average number of people per household in the watershed (2.62).)

(See Table 14.) For households in the SMB watershed, this translates into an annual cost of \$4.72 per household.

Staff has also estimated the cost of addressing dry weather runoff from some of the natural creeks that impact beaches, such as Topanga Creek. We expect that similar prevention and treatment measures to those being implemented in the Malibu watershed will be needed. Specifically, we expect that some storm drain disinfection systems may need to be installed and, in addition, a watershed source control program will need to be implemented to reduce anthropogenic nonpoint sources of bacteria such as from malfunctioning septic systems. The estimated cost per watershed is estimated at \$1.0 to \$2.0 million (based on cost estimates for similar management measures in the Malibu watershed). Dry weather implementation programs are likely to be needed in eight subwatersheds based on the historical data analysis: Nicholas Canyon, Trancas Canyon, Zuma Canyon, Latigo Canyon, Corral Canyon, Las Flores Canyon, Piedra Gorda Canyon, and Topanga Canyon. Estimating on average \$1.5 million per watershed equals a total cost of \$12 million (\$1.1 million in annualized costs). Again, for households in the Santa Monica Bay watershed, this translates into an annual cost of \$1.52 per household.

Collectively, the estimated annual cost per household to achieve compliance with the TMDL during *dry weather* throughout the year is \$9.50.

9 Monitoring Programs

The monitoring program for the TMDL consists of two key components: a source characterization component and a shoreline compliance monitoring component.

9.1 Source Characterization

The purpose of the source characterization component is three-fold. Each of these purposes is described below. First, it will allow the Regional Board to refine estimates of the “baseline” level of exceedance in the reference system. The TMDL waste load allocations are set such that the number of days of exceedance at the base of a subwatershed should be the lesser of that observed in the reference system or existing levels of exceedance for a particular shoreline site. Staff selected Arroyo Sequit Canyon and Leo Carrillo Beach as the

“reference” system for the purpose of defining a baseline level of exceedance. At the time of writing, staff did not have data on bacteria densities at the mouth of this system (i.e., the wave wash). Over the course of the year, staff will be collecting data from this system, and potentially others, to better define the baseline level of exceedance observed in local natural systems during both wet and dry weather.

The second purpose of the source characterization component is to allow the Regional Board to better calibrate and validate the model used in the wet weather TMDL and refine estimates of the necessary reductions in the number of days of exceedance for each subwatershed and by municipality. Over the next one to two years, a coalition of agencies will collect water quality data under wet weather conditions to refine estimates of bacteria densities from particular land uses and critical sources and at various instream locations. This will be a continuation of the wet weather sampling program to support this and other TMDLs begun in 2001.

Finally, the source characterization component will assist municipalities implementing the TMDL. The data collected on average bacteria densities from different land uses, and the range of bacteria densities within a land use and during different storm events will be used in the model to evaluate different management scenarios and prioritize areas for implementation of storm water best management practices.

An additional component of the source characterization monitoring program will be to identify the ownership and status of all private drains identified by the Santa Monica BayKeeper through its BeachKeeper monitoring program. As stated earlier, Santa Monica BayKeeper has documented 342 storm drains that discharge to SMB beaches from Point Dume to Malaga Cove (see Appendix C) and an additional 271 discharges to the Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). Responsible agencies and/or individuals must notify the Regional Board within 120 days after the effective date of this TMDL of any additions, deletions, or changes to this list. Furthermore, the Regional Board must be notified of the ownership of the discharge (if applicable), the type of discharge, and any permits held for the discharge.

9.2 Compliance Determination

Compliance will be determined by daily or weekly sampling in the wave wash at all major drains and creeks or at existing monitoring stations at beaches without storm drains or freshwater outlets.²⁶ At all locations, samples must be taken at ankle depth, on an incoming wave, when the tide height is less than +2 feet. If any geometric mean target is exceeded for a rolling 30-day period, or if the number of days exceeding the single sample objectives exceeds the allowable levels set in Table 11 for either of the two time periods of concern, the contributing area and responsible jurisdictions and agencies will be considered out-of-compliance with the TMDL. Once source elimination, treatment or diversion is implemented for a freshwater outlet (i.e., storm drain or creek), and exceedance will only be considered a violation upon sampling confirmation within 24 hours.

9.2.1 Follow-up Monitoring

If a single sample shows the discharge or contributing area to be out of compliance, daily sampling in the wave wash or at the existing open shoreline monitoring location shall be conducted (if it is not already) until all single sample objectives are below the thresholds. Furthermore, if a beach location with a freshwater outlet is out-of-compliance (based on a confirmation sample within 24 hours), responsible jurisdictions and agencies under the LA County MS4 and Caltrans Storm Water Permits will be required to initiate an initial investigation, which may lead to a sanitary survey of the subwatershed(s) per Assembly Bill 538 protocols to more specifically locate the source of the problem, and may wish to conduct compliance monitoring at key municipal boundaries as part of this effort. (See Appendix H for text of Assembly Bill 538.)

If a beach location without a freshwater outlet is out-of-compliance or if the outlet (i.e., storm drain) is diverted, the adjacent municipality, County agency(ies), or State agency(ies) will be responsible for conducting the investigation.

²⁶ The frequency of sampling (i.e., daily versus weekly) will be at the discretion of the implementing agencies. However, the number of sample days that may exceed the objectives will be scaled accordingly (see Table 11).

The County of Los Angeles and municipalities within the Santa Monica Bay watershed are strongly encouraged to pool efforts and coordinate with other appropriate monitoring agencies in order to meet the challenges posed by this TMDL by developing cooperative compliance monitoring programs.

10 References

Cabelli, V. J. 1983. Health effects criteria for marine recreational waters. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA-600/1-80-031, Cincinnati, Ohio.

California Code of Regulations, title 17, section 7958.

Cheung, W.H.S., Chang, K.C.K., Hung, R.P.S. 1990. Variations in microbial indicator densities in beach waters and health-related assessment of bathing water quality. *Epidemiol. Infect.* 106:329-344.

City of Los Angeles. 2001. Low-flow diversion of dry weather urban runoff. January 12, 2001.

City of Los Angeles. 1999. Santa Monica Bay Biennial Assessment Report 1997-98. Environmental Monitoring Division.

County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. 2001. Joint Water Pollution Control Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2000. NPDES No. CA0053813.

Favero, M.S. 1985. Microbiologic indicators of health risks associated with swimming. *AJPH* 75(9):1051-1053.

Haile, R.W., Witte, J.S. 1997. Addendum to "An epidemiological study of possible adverse health effects of swimming in Santa Monica Bay." Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project.

Haile, R.W., Witte, J.S., Gold, M., Cressey, R., McGee, C., Millikan, R.C., Glasser, A., Harawa, N., Ervin, C., Harmon, P., Harper, J., Dermond, J., Alamillo, J., Barret, K., Nides, M., Wang, G. 1999. The health effects of swimming in ocean water contaminated by storm drain runoff. *Epidemiology* 10(4):355-363.

Haile, R.W., Alamillo, J., Barret, K., Cressey, R., Dermond, J., Ervin, C., Glasser, A., Harawa, N., Harmon, P., Harper, J., McGee, C., Millikan, R.C., Nides, M., Witte, J.S. 1996. An epidemiological study of possible adverse health effects of swimming in Santa Monica Bay, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project.

Hanemann, Michael, Pendleton, Linwood, Layton, David. 2001. "Modeling the regional economic and social impact of marine pollution in southern California." Address to the California Coastal Commission. August 6, 2001.

Heal the Bay, Inc. 2001. Eleventh annual beach report card.

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District. 1999. Tapia Water Reclamation Facility 1999 Annual Report.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. 2001. "Proposed amendment of the Water Quality Control Plan - Los Angeles Region to revise bacteria objectives for waters designated for contact recreation." July 31, 2001.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. 2000. Trash TMDL for the Los Angeles River Watershed. Preliminary Technical Draft, March 17, 2000.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. 1998. Proposed 1998 list of impaired surface waters (the 303(d) List). March 24, 1998.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. 1996. Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region 1996 California Water Quality Assessment – 305(b) Report: Supporting Documentation for Los Angeles Region.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. 1994. Water Quality Control Plan, Los Angeles Region.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. 1999. Los Angeles County 1998-99 Stormwater Monitoring Report. July 14, 1999.

Los Angeles County Fire Department, Lifeguard Operations. 2001.
www.lacountylifeguards.org.

National Research Council. 1999. Monsoons to microbes: Understanding the ocean's role in human health. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.

National Technical Advisory Committee. 1968. Water Quality Criteria. Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C.

Noble, Rachel T., J.H. Dorsey, M.K. Leecaster, M. Mazur, C.D. McGee, D. Moore, V. Orozco-Borbon, D. Reid, K. Schiff, P.M. Vainik, S.B. Weisberg. 2000a. Southern California Bight 1998 Regional Monitoring Program: III. Storm event shoreline microbiology. Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Westminster, CA

Noble, Rachel T., Dorsey, J., Leecaster, M., Mazur, M., McGee, C., Moore, D., Victoria, O., Reid, D., Schiff, K., Vainik P., Weisberg, S. 2000b. Southern California Bight 1998 Regional Monitoring Program, Vol II: Winter shoreline microbiology. Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Westminster, CA.

Noble, Rachel T., Dorsey, J., Leecaster, M., Mazur, M., McGee, C., Moore, D., Victoria, O., Reid, D., Schiff, K., Vainik P., Weisberg, S. 1999. Southern California Bight 1998 Regional Monitoring Program, Vol I: Summer shoreline microbiology. Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Westminster, CA.

O'Connell, Linda. 2001. State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality. Personal communication.

Pike, E.B. 1992. "Statistical aspects of microbial populations in recreational waters" in Recreational water quality management, Volume I: Coastal waters, Kay, D. (ed.). Ellis Horwood Limited, England.

Pruss, A. 1998. Review of epidemiological studies on health effects from exposure to recreational waters. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 27:1-9.

Santa Monica BayKeeper. 2001. Unpublished data.

Southern California Association of Governments. 1993. GIS coverage of land use.

SCCWRP, 2001. "Retrospective evaluation of shoreline water quality along Santa Monica Bay beaches" in Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Annual Report 1999-2000.

SCCWRP, 2001. Unpublished data.

Southern California Coastal Water Research Project. 2000. General workplan for wet weather modeling of the Los Angeles River and Santa Monica Bay watersheds.

SWRCB. 1997. Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California. Sacramento, CA.

Taggart, Mitzy. 2001. Heal the Bay, Unpublished data.

United States District Court, Northern District of California. 1999. Heal the Bay Inc., *et al.* v. Browner, *et al.* Case No. 98-4825 SBA. March 22, 1999.

U.S. EPA. 1997. Guidelines for preparation of the comprehensive state water quality assessments (305(b) Reports) and electronic updates: Supplement. EPA 841-B-97-002B. Office of Water, Washington, D.C.

U.S. EPA. 1991. Guidance of water quality-based decisions: The TMDL process. EPA 440/4-91-001. Office of Water Regulations and Standards, Washington, D.C.

U.S. EPA. 1986. Ambient water quality criteria for bacteria – 1986. EPA 440/5-84-002, Office of Water Regulations and Standards, Criteria and Standards Division, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1976. Quality Criteria for Water. U.S. EPA, Washington, D.C.