



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Los Angeles Region



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320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200, Los Angeles, California 90013
Phone (213) 576-6600 FAX (213) 576-6640 - Internet Address: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4>

To: Interested Persons

From: Renee DeShazo (Original Signed By)
Environmental Scientist, Standards and TMDL Unit
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region

Date: August 1, 2002

Subject: SANTA MONICA BAY BEACHES WET-WEATHER BACTERIA TMDL

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region (Regional Board) will consider a proposed amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region* (Basin Plan) to incorporate a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to reduce bacteria at Santa Monica Bay (SMB) beaches during wet weather.¹ The Regional Board is scheduled to consider this amendment at a public hearing on September 26, 2002. Additional regulations or policies, consistent with the general purpose of the proposed amendment and complementary to the proposal may be developed at the hearing as a logical outgrowth. The Regional Board will take action on the proposed amendment after hearing staff's presentation and public comments. Copies of the proposed amendment and staff report are enclosed for your information. Please contact Renee DeShazo at (213) 576-6783 if you have any questions.

Public Hearing
September 26, 2002 9:00 a.m.
City of Calabasas Council Chambers
26135 Mureau Road
Calabasas, California

Written comments and exhibits must be submitted to the Regional Board no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 16, 2002. Failure to comply with these requirements is grounds for the Board to refuse to admit the proposed written comment or exhibit into evidence (California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 649.4).

Comments should be submitted to:

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region
320 W. 4th Street
Los Angeles, California 90013

ATTN: Renee DeShazo

¹ Wet weather being defined as days with 1/10th inch of rain or greater and the three days following the rain event.

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All exhibits including charts, graphs and other testimony presented at the public hearing must be left with the Regional Board for inclusion in the Administrative Record. Please note that the Regional Board may impose time limits on oral testimony at the public hearing.

Background

The proposed amendment was originally distributed on November 9, 2001, and addressed both wet and dry weather. As a result of extensive comments on the wet weather components of the TMDL released on November 9, 2001, staff bifurcated the TMDL into a dry weather TMDL and a wet weather TMDL. A public hearing was held on the dry weather TMDL on January 24, 2002, at which time the Regional Board adopted the proposed Basin Plan amendment incorporating a Dry-Weather Bacteria TMDL for Santa Monica Bay Beaches.

To better address the comments received on the wet weather components of the TMDL, Regional Board staff convened a meeting of the TMDL steering committee – made up of key stakeholders – in April 2002 to discuss key aspects of the TMDL including the waste load allocations, potential implementation strategies, and costs of implementation. Key stakeholders were encouraged to work cooperatively to submit implementation strategies and cost estimates for inclusion in the TMDL. On June 21, 2002, a preliminary draft of the Wet-Weather TMDL was released on the Regional Board's web site. On June 27, 2002, the Regional Board held a public workshop to solicit comments on the Wet-Weather TMDL at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The draft released today incorporates many of the comments of the steering committee and other stakeholders. The appendices to the staff report are available on the Regional Board's website at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/~rwqcb4/html/meetings/tmdl/tmdl.html>. If you would like the appendices sent in hard copy, please call Sandra Kelley at (213) 576-6619 or fax your request to her attention at (213) 576-6686.

The Regional Board's goal in incorporating the above-mentioned TMDL is to reduce the risk of illness associated with swimming in marine waters contaminated with human sewage and other sources of bacteria. Swimming in waters with elevated bacteria densities has long been associated with adverse health effects. Local and national epidemiological studies compel the conclusion that there is a causal relationship between adverse health effects, such as gastroenteritis and upper respiratory illness, and recreational water quality, as measured by bacteria indicator densities.

The Regional Board is charged with implementing the provisions of both the Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California law) and the federal Clean Water Act in the Los Angeles Region. One of the ways in which the Regional Board implements these laws is through the development and implementation of water quality standards for all of the water bodies within the Region. Section 303(d)(A)(1) of the Clean Water Act requires the Regional Board to identify water quality limited segments within the Region (i.e., those water bodies not attaining water quality standards), and establish TMDLs for the pollutants causing the impairments. A TMDL specifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards, and allocates the acceptable pollutant load to point, non-point and natural sources. The TMDL can be expressed in terms of either mass per time, toxicity, concentration, or other appropriate measure.

Analysis of the extensive shoreline bacteriological monitoring data collected at SMB beaches has consistently shown that bacteria densities frequently exceed the Water Contact Recreation (REC-1) water

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quality objectives for protection of public health during wet weather. The Regional Board has prepared this TMDL to address the documented bacteriological water quality impairments at 44 beaches from the Los Angeles/Ventura County line, to the northwest, to Outer Cabrillo Beach, just south of the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The TMDL establishes a plan for reducing the number of wet weather days that exceed REC-1 bacteriological objectives at SMB beaches such that (1) bacteriological water quality is as good as that of a "reference" beach (i.e., a beach with a largely natural drainage area) and (2) no degradation of existing water quality occurs. The purpose of this TMDL is to remove the bacteriological water quality impairments that prevent SMB beaches from supporting the REC-1 beneficial use. It involves holding municipalities within a subwatershed jointly accountable for exceedances of bacteria objectives from their storm drains, and encourages the use of a variety of methods to prevent these exceedances.

Enclosures:

- (a) Notice of Filing (pursuant to Section 21080.5 of the Public Resources Code),
- (b) Staff Report for the Basin Plan amendment to incorporate a Wet-Weather Bacteria TMDL for Santa Monica Bay Beaches,
- (c) California Environmental Quality Act Checklist and Determination with Respect to Significant Environmental Impacts,
- (d) Tentative Resolution amending the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region* to incorporate the Santa Monica Bay Beaches Wet-Weather Bacteria TMDL,
- (e) Proposed Amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region*.

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