



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## Los Angeles Region



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To: Interested Persons

From: Melinda Becker *Melinda Becker*  
Section Chief, Regional Programs  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region

Date: April 4, 2006

Subject: Notice of Public Hearing for a proposed amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region* to incorporate a Total Maximum Daily Loads for Bacterial Indicator Densities in Ballona Creek, Ballona Estuary, and Sepulveda Channel.

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 Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to reduce bacteria densities in Ballona Creek, Ballona Estuary, and Sepulveda Channel. 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 of discussions. The Regional Board will act on the proposed amendment after hearing staff's presentation and public comments. Copies of the proposed resolution, Basin Plan amendment, staff report, CEQA checklist and Notice of Filing can be obtained from the Regional Board website at [www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4) (select "Total Maximum Daily Loads/TMDLs" under the "Updates and News" tab). Please contact Ginachi Amah at (213) 576-6685 for additional information.

***A Public Hearing will be held on June 8, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.  
at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
700 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California***

Written comments and exhibits must be submitted to the Regional Board no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2006. 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 West Fourth Street, Suite 200  
Los Angeles, California 90013

ATTN: Ginachi Amah

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.

***California Environmental Protection Agency***



*Our mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for the benefit of present and future generations.*

## Background

The proposed amendment would incorporate into the Basin Plan TMDLs to reduce bacterial indicator densities in Ballona Creek, Ballona Estuary, and Sepulveda Channel. The Regional Board's goal in incorporating the above-mentioned TMDLs is to protect the beneficial uses of to reduce the risk of illness associated with recreating in fresh and marine waters contaminated with human sewage and other sources of bacteria, and to restore the overall water quality in Ballona Creek, Ballona Estuary, and Sepulveda Channel. The Regional Board has prepared this TMDL to address the documented bacteriological water quality impairments in these waterbodies.

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. Under the federal Clean Water Act, water quality standards consist of beneficial use designations of water bodies and numeric or narrative water quality objectives that are protective of those beneficial uses as well as the State's anti-degradation policy. Section 303(d)(A)(1) of the Clean Water Act requires the State to identify those waters, which are impaired by pollution (not meeting 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 and nonpoint sources. The TMDL can be expressed in terms of either mass per time, toxicity, concentration, or other appropriate measure.

The proposed TMDL sets numeric water quality targets equal to the updated Basin Plan REC-1 objectives for marine and fresh waters (for Ballona Estuary and Sepulveda Channel respectively), the new Basin Plan objectives for LREC-1 (for Reach 2 of Ballona Creek), and the REC-2 Basin Plan objectives for Reach 1 of Ballona Creek.

To implement the single sample bacteria objectives for waters designated REC-1 and LREC-1, and to set allocations based on the single sample targets, an allowable number of exceedance days is set for each reach. The numeric target in the TMDL is expressed as 'allowable exceedance days' since bacterial density and the frequency of single sample exceedances is most relevant to public health. The US EPA allows states to select the most appropriate measure to express the TMDL; and allowable exceedance days are considered an 'appropriate measure' consistent with the definition in 40 CFR 130.2(i). The REC-1 and LREC-1 geometric mean targets, which are based on a rolling 30-day period, will be strictly adhered to and may not be exceeded at any time.

The REC-2 objectives allow for a 10% exceedance frequency of the single sample limit in samples collected during a 30-day period. This allowance, which is based on an acceptable level of health risk, will be applied in lieu of the allowable exceedance days for the REC-1 and LREC-1 objectives. The REC-2 geometric mean target, which is based on a rolling 30-day period, will be strictly adhered to and may not be exceeded at any time.

The TMDL establishes a 6-year plan for reducing the number of summer dry weather days and winter dry-weather days, and a 10-year plan for reducing the number of wet weather days that exceed the applicable bacteria objectives in Ballona Creek, Ballona Estuary, and Sepulveda Channel. The purpose of this TMDL is to remove the human-generated (which includes both human sources of bacteria and human activities such as storm water conveyances that have concentrated natural sources of bacteria) bacteriological water quality impairments that prevent Ballona Creek, Ballona Estuary, and Sepulveda



Channel from supporting their recreational beneficial uses. Responsible jurisdictions within the Ballona Creek Watershed are held jointly accountable for attaining the Waste Load Allocations for the impaired reaches, and are encouraged to use of a variety of methods to prevent these exceedances. It is proposed that these responsible agencies will achieve compliance with their waste load allocations within 10 years of the effective date of the TMDL. The Regional Board may extend the allowable implementation schedule up to 14 years from the effective date of the TMDL if an integrated resources approach is employed.

Load Allocations are assigned to Del Rey Lagoon and the Ballona Wetlands – both of which discharge to Ballona Estuary, and are considered as nonpoint sources. Since inputs of bacteria to these waterbodies are expected to be predominantly from natural sources, the TMDL requires a natural sources study to determine the eligibility of these nonpoint sources for the natural sources exclusion provision of the updated bacteria objectives. Pending this determination, both nonpoint sources are assigned load allocations, expressed as allowable exceedance days, to be met on the same schedule with the waste load allocations.

