

Stephanie Hada
TMDL Unit 2
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region
320 West Fourth Street, Suite 200
Los Angeles, California 90013

Subject: City of Rancho Palos Verdes Comments on the draft Santa Monica Bay Nearshore and Offshore Debris Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

Dear Ms. Hada,

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City) has long been at the forefront of efforts to improve water quality in the Santa Monica Bay and is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the proposed draft Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan Amendment) intended to add the TMDL for marine debris in Santa Monica Bay. The City recognizes the importance of addressing this issue, however, it believes there are certain deficiencies in the proposed Basin Plan Amendment and would like to recommend the revisions outlined below be incorporated into the TMDL in order to improve the overall efficiency of the proposed Amendment.

1. The City believes that some of the fundamental elements of the TMDL are not clearly defined.

The definition of Santa Monica Bay is not clearly outlined in this TMDL. The 'nearshore' zone is defined as being bound by the 'shoreline' which is a transient line subject to tidal fluctuations. In order to monitor the shoreline in compliance with the TMDL's proposed Trash Monitoring and Reporting Plan (TMRP), the responsible agencies should have a clear definition of the demarcation of this line. Without this clarification, it will be difficult to establish baseline load and waste load allocations and discharge rates which are consistent and reliable. In addition, compliance with the TMDL is defined as "zero trash in and on the shorelines of the Santa Monica Bay". Clearly this definition is important since it is used to determine agencies' compliance with the TMDL.

In addition, the term 'beach' is not clearly defined. Rancho Palos Verdes' coastline is characterized by rocky and inaccessible terrain and should not be subject to the non-point source load allocation requirements of this TMDL. The City proposes that the word 'sandy' be included in the definition of beaches as non-point sources. Alternatively, the City proposes that the term 'beaches' be explicitly limited to those agencies identified in the Tentative Amendment at p. 6 in the section describing load allocations assigned to such jurisdictions.

2. The City believes it should be exempted from having to submit a Plastic Pellet Monitoring and Reporting Plan (PMRP). The requirements of the PMRP are not relevant to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes.

Page 70 of the Staff Report states, "Plastic pellets will be monitored at the selected outfalls of storm drains within the Santa Monica Bay watershed, where industrial permittees are located". In

addition, the Source Analysis for the Proposed Amendment at p.4 describes the “principal source” of plastic pellets as “from industry that imports, manufacturers, processes, transports, stores, recycles or otherwise handles plastic pellets”. But, the City has no industrial land use within the Santa Monica Bay subwatershed. There are no railways or ports within City boundaries which could be potential contributors of plastic pellets, and Rancho Palos Verdes does not receive drainage from any areas where these types of facilities are located.

The City would like language added to the Basin Plan Amendment at p. 7 under the Section entitled “Plastic Pellets” as follows:

“Jurisdictions and agencies identified as responsible jurisdictions for point sources of trash in this Santa Monica Bay Debris TMDL and in the existing Malibu Creek and Ballona Creek Trash TMDLs shall prepare a Plastic Pellet Monitoring and Reporting Plan (PMRP), provided that any agency or jurisdiction which has none of the industrial plastic industries using or otherwise handling plastic pellets within its limits shall be exempted from this requirement. If an agency changes its zoning and land use plans to allow for industries that use or otherwise handle plastic pellets, then it shall be subject to the PMRP within 90 days of the effective date of such a land use amendment.”

In addition, the industrial facilities outlined in the TMDL are already subject to Statewide General or Individual Industrial Stormwater permits. This is specifically noted in the Tentative Amendment at p. 6. These permittees are required to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and to submit annual monitoring reports demonstrating compliance with the plastic pellet waste load allocations (WLAs). Therefore, the City believes that the responsibility for assuring and demonstrating compliance with these WLAs should lie solely with the facilities for which they were issued. While the City understands the Board’s concern in regards to a potential spill of these pellets during transport and believes that this concern can be addressed through a Spill Response Plan included in the required TMRP, it feels that the absence of industrial facilities and transportation corridors in the City warrants an exemption from this requirement altogether.

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes thanks you for considering our comments and hopes that you find them pertinent and constructive. We look forward to working with you toward the common goal of restoring and protecting our impaired waterbodies. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



Ron Dragoo
Senior Engineer