

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

for the Basin Plan Amendment to Update
Water Quality Objectives for Groundwater and Surface Water Protection

September 1, 2011

This plan describes the effort necessary to have successful, effective, and efficient public participation in the development of the proposed Basin Plan amendment to *Update Water Quality Objectives for Groundwater and Surface Water Protection* (Basin Plan amendment). The public participation plan is designed to identify interested stakeholders and present the outreach strategy that Regional Water Board staff will use to inform the public on development of the BPA and to solicit early public comments on the proposal. Stakeholders include landowners, residents, business owners, special interest groups, governmental officials and staff, academics, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties.

Goals

The primary goals for stakeholder outreach efforts are as follows:

1. To communicate and inform stakeholders about the proposed Basin Plan amendment, including the status of the development of the amendment, alternatives considered, implementation program options, potential environmental impacts, and other components of the Basin Plan amendment process.
2. To solicit and receive relevant and timely input from stakeholders.

Framework for Stakeholder Involvement

Due to the variety of stakeholders in the North Coast Region, Regional Water Board staff will organize and undertake several different venues for stakeholder involvement. These include:

- Development of a project webpage;
- Notifications of meetings, availability of documents, etc, by e-mail ,hard copy and newspaper;
- Solicitation of public comment early and through out the development of the project;
- Conduct meetings with stakeholders and other agencies, as requested;
- Provide periodic updates to Regional Water Board and the public through workshops and informational items. Each of these is described in more detail below.

Webpage

An informational webpage will be maintained with contact information, updates on the status of the Basin Plan amendment, links to available documents, and notices of public meetings, public comment periods, and other opportunities for stakeholder involvement.

E-mail & Hard Copy Notifications

Notices of public meetings, document availability, public comment periods, and other opportunities for stakeholder involvement will be sent via e-mail to interested parties that have provided their e-mail address or signed up via the web-based email list subscription form (LYRIS). Interested parties that have only provided a mailing address will receive hard copy notices via the US Post. A database of interested parties is maintained by Regional Water Board staff. The LYRIS List is maintained by State Water Board staff. Announcement of the Regional Water Board hearing to adopt the proposed Basin Plan Amendment will be printed in a newspaper of general circulation, in accordance with California Water Code §13244.

General Correspondences

Staff will make every effort to be available to stakeholders in a timely manner whether via phone, e-mail, or letters.

Document Review, Public Comment, & Response to Comments

Drafts of the Basin Plan Amendment, including the Basin Plan amendment language, Staff Report, environmental checklist and analyses, (referred to as the substitute environmental documentation) will be made available for public review and comment. This will allow stakeholders to review the proposed documents and provides the opportunity for stakeholders to make comments and suggestions. Staff will make changes to the Basin Plan amendment in response to public comments, as staff deem appropriate. This will help produce a more comprehensive Basin Plan amendment update. The review and comment period will last for a minimum of 45 days. Staff will respond to all written comments received during the comment period. The "Response to Comments" document will be posted on the webpage, and made available to the public and Board members prior to the adoption hearing.

Meetings with Stakeholders

Whenever it is possible and reasonable to do so, staff will meet with stakeholders to discuss the Basin Plan amendment. Meetings might be with an individual or with a group of stakeholders that have a particular interest or concern. Staff will make every effort to accommodate requests for such meetings.

Staff plan to meet with many of the stakeholder groups that are currently involved with water quality issues in the Region in order to seek input and communicate the status of the Basin Plan amendment. Staff may attend regular meetings of established stakeholder groups, or staff may organize separate ad hoc meetings. Meetings might be face-to-face or via the phone.

Interested stakeholder groups that Regional Water Board staff have identified for this Basin Plan amendment include, but are not limited to:

- USEPA
- State Water Board basin planning staff
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Health Services
- Other public officials, as requested
- Consultants for cleanup sites
- NPDES/WDR permit holders
- Confined animal operators
- Vineyard and winery owners and organizations
- Dairy organizations
- Farm organizations
- Watershed groups
- Community Clean Water Institute

Public Meetings

Staff will host public meeting and / or workshops on the proposed Basin Plan amendment. During these meetings, staff will summarize key points of the amendment, give status updates, solicit suggestions and comments from stakeholders and the public, and answer questions as possible.

The following public meetings are currently planned, although more may be scheduled to accommodate public interest or address a particular issue.

CEQA Scoping Meeting - COMPLETED

- Purposes: To provide an overview of the Basin Plan amendment, to solicit input on possible environmental impacts for staff to analyze as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis, and to solicit input and comments on the Basin Plan Amendment in general.
- Timing: July 2010
- Location: Sonoma County Educational Offices, Santa Rosa

Updates to the Regional Water Board

- Purposes: To inform Regional Water Board members and the public on the details and status of the Basin Plan amendment, to solicit input and comments from Board members, and to hear comments from the public.
- Timing: At least semi-annually (beginning in March 2011) throughout the development process. The updates will be set as informational agenda items (written or oral) during regularly scheduled Board Meetings.
- Location: Regional Water Board office in Santa Rosa, or other meeting locations in the Region.

Public Workshops

- Purpose: To provide an overview of the public review draft of the Basin Plan amendment, to summarize staff's recommendations, and to solicit input and comments.
- Timing: Early in the public review and comment period, tentatively October or November 2011.
- Location: Regional Water Board office in Santa Rosa and possibly northern region (Eureka-area) if funding permits.

Public Adoption Hearing before the Regional Water Board

- Purpose: Regional Water Board adoption of the Basin Plan amendment and an opportunity for public comment.
- Timing: Early 2012
- Location: Regional Water Board office in Santa Rosa.

Public Adoption Hearing before the State Water Board

- Purpose: State Water Board adoption of the Basin Plan amendment and an opportunity for public comment.
- Timing: 2012
- Location: Sacramento

Decision-Making Process

During stakeholder meetings and in response to public comments, staff will present the issues or questions; staff will solicit stakeholder ideas, suggestions, comments, and alternatives; and then staff will make the decision on how to proceed. The rationale for major decisions will be documented in the Staff Report. The final decision-making body will be the Regional Water Board, followed by the State Water Board and the USEPA.

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