

ITEM: 10

SUBJECT: Status of the Long-term Program

BOARD ACTION: *No Board action. Information Item Only.*

BACKGROUND: In Fall 2008, Central Valley Water Board staff convened the long-term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) Stakeholder Advisory Workgroup. The Workgroup included representatives from local, State, and federal agencies; agricultural interests; water suppliers; environmental/ environmental justice groups; and other interested parties. Over the course of 9 months (December 2008–August 2009), the Advisory Workgroup came to consensus on the goals and objectives of the program and the five alternatives that should be considered and analyzed in a Program Environmental Impact Report.

At the request of the Workgroup, staff developed a “straw proposal” based on an initial review of the five alternatives and consideration of existing Water Board regulatory programs that address irrigated agriculture or are structured to deal with a large group of waste dischargers. In April and May 2010, staff reviewed the straw proposal with stakeholders. The elements that received stakeholder support, the concerns expressed, environmental impacts, economic analysis, and policy analysis were all considered in developing a recommended alternative.

On 28 July, staff released a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and Economics Report for the long-term program. The Draft PEIR provides programmatic analysis of environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the five programmatic alternatives developed by the Stakeholder Advisory Workgroup and a staff preferred alternative for regulating waste discharges from irrigated agricultural lands.

The staff recommended ILRP includes the following elements: consideration of surface and groundwater waste discharges, third-party lead or coalition groups; tiered requirements for regional surface and groundwater management plans; and tiered requirements for regional surface and groundwater quality monitoring. The recommended ILRP would also involve the development of 8-12 geographically or commodity-based waivers and/ or waste discharge requirements (orders). A brief summary of the long-term ILRP development process and recommended ILRP is included in Attachment A.

The public comment period for the Draft PEIR, Economics Report, and recommended ILRP is from 28 July – 27 September. Stakeholder comments will be considered during the development of a final recommended long-term ILRP and Final PEIR. The final

recommended ILRP and PEIR will be released in early 2011 for Central Valley Water Board consideration no later than 31 March 2011. Orders to implement the long-term ILRP will be developed for Board consideration during the year following Board certification of the PEIR.

No recommendation, information item only.

Mgmt. Review _____

Legal Review **AM** _____

September 22, 2010
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