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Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

Notice Date: January 19, 2012

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP

TOMALES BAY MERCURY TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL)

Monday, February 13, 2012

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Red Barn Classroom at Point Reyes National Seashore
Near the Bear Valley Visitor Center
76 Bear Valley Road, Point Reyes Station, California

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) staff will hold a public workshop to explain and seek public comment regarding the content of the Tomales Bay Mercury TMDL. The meeting time and location are provided above.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

We intend to recommend that the Water Board adopt a TMDL to address the mercury problem in Tomales Bay. The already-adopted Walker Creek Watershed mercury TMDL addresses mercury problems upstream of the Bay.

Tomales Bay has been designated as impaired by mercury since 1996, due to concerns that drainage from the Gambonini Mercury Mine might have increased mercury concentrations in wildlife and sport fish. In 2004, Cal/EPA's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment issued an advisory against consuming any sharks from Tomales Bay, and limiting consumption of other sport fish and wild red rock crabs. Importantly in the Bay, both commercial and wild filter-feeding shell fish (oysters, mussels, and clams), and many species of sport fish, have levels of methylmercury that are safe for human consumption.

The Gambonini Mercury Mine is already cleaned up, and additional cleanup actions already are planned for the Walker Creek watershed downstream of the Mine. We believe these actions are likely to address the mercury problem in Tomales Bay. Therefore, we do not foresee a need for further actions to address mercury in the Bay. We have proposed that the Water Board conduct or cause to be conducted mercury monitoring in the Bay to ensure that mercury concentrations continue to decrease to acceptable levels.

PROJECT MATERIALS

The TMDL Staff Report, tentative resolution, and other materials for this TMDL will be made available in the near future on the Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/TMDLs/

MEETING PURPOSE AND FORMAT

The purpose of this public workshop is to provide information, answer questions, and take comments on the proposed TMDL. The format consists of a short presentation by Water Board staff followed by a question and answer session.

NEXT STEPS

By early February 2012, we plan to release the TMDL for public review, and written comments will be due 30 days later. The Water Board will consider adopting the TMDL during a formal public hearing on April 11, 2012. Information on how to submit comments or about the April hearing will be posted on the Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/TMDLs/

For additional information, please contact Carrie Austin at (510) 622-1015 or via email at CAustin@waterboards.ca.gov.