

ITEM: 23

SUBJECT: Participation in Delta Regional Monitoring Program In Lieu of Individual Monitoring Efforts

BOARD ACTION: Consideration of Resolution Regarding Participation in Delta Regional Monitoring Program In Lieu of Individual Monitoring Efforts

BACKGROUND: Many agencies and groups monitor water quality, water flows, and ecological conditions in the Bay-Delta, but there is no comprehensive contaminants monitoring and assessment program. The Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), California Department of Water Resources and other organizations, including the Water Boards, conduct some of these analyses, but due to their specific mandates, information gaps may exist. Emerging concerns with contaminants related to the documented decline of pelagic organisms in the Delta, wastewater treatment plant discharges, agricultural discharges, pesticides, blue-green algae toxicity, and unknown toxicity events all highlight the need for a system to coordinate among monitoring programs, integrate contaminants monitoring into existing monitoring efforts, and regularly assess and synthesize collected data.

The Water Boards have made it a priority to develop a Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) for the Delta that not only coordinates monitoring and assessment efforts in and around the Delta, but also regularly gathers, compiles, assesses, and reports data in support of the program. The Delta RMP, like all other regional monitoring efforts, will evolve over time, expanding the scope of issues being studied and the breadth of stakeholder involvement.

The Delta RMP has completed its organizational phase – governance structures are in place, there is an active steering committee, technical committee co-chairs have been appointed, and efforts are in progress to select the first projects for the RMP. The proposed resolution begins to address a critical aspect of future phases – how the RMP will be funded.

In the long term, it is anticipated that funding and in-kind services will come from many sources, including dischargers, agencies managing or modifying the Delta, groups that make beneficial use of Delta waters and habitat, and SWAMP. It is the intent of the Central Valley Water Board to work in concert with the Delta RMP Steering Committee to secure other sources of funding for the program. But the initial funding will come from redirection of funds from dischargers to the RMP, primarily from their current expenditures for individual receiving water monitoring, special studies, and other related activities. The redirected funds will be used by the Steering Committee to develop and implement a more

spatially and temporally sound monitoring and study program than currently exists with numerous individual monitoring efforts and continue to support the program over time. The various agencies involved in the RMP will need to evaluate the funding and in-kind services that can be provided to the RMP, and the mechanisms that they will use to provide the funding and in-kind services.

The agencies have asked for a commitment by the Board for the modification of monitoring programs and other permit study requirements to help them evaluate redirection of funds and monitoring efforts into the RMP permits. The proposed resolution provides assurances to the dischargers that the Board will consider modifications to existing permits to allow participation in the Delta Regional Monitoring Program in lieu of individual monitoring efforts.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the proposed resolution.

Mgmt. Review kdl
Legal Review

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