

ITEM: 23

SUBJECT: Status Report – Control Program for Salt and Boron Discharges into the Lower San Joaquin River (LSJR)

DISCUSSION: In September 2004, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) adopted the Control Program for Salt and Boron Discharges (Control Program) into the Lower San Joaquin River to achieve compliance with salinity water quality objectives at Vernalis, the boundary of the Delta. The Office of Administrative Law approved the amendment on 28 July 2006.

The Control Program prescribes salt load allocations to seven geographic areas that comprise the LSJR basin and also to imported salt from the Delta Mendota Canal which is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and operated by the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. Dischargers of irrigation return flows are in compliance with the Control Program if they meet any of the following conditions:

1. Cease discharge to surface water,
2. Discharge does not exceed 315 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (30-day running average)
3. Operate under WDRs that include effluent limits for salt, or
4. Operate under a waiver of WDRs for salt and boron discharges

The schedule of compliance for load allocations is phased with areas contributing the most salt to the lower San Joaquin River required to comply first. The first compliance date is 28 July 2014¹ for nonpoint source dischargers on the west side of the LSJR basin and Reclamation for the Delta Mendota Canal.

The Control Program also includes the opportunity for dischargers to participate in a Central Valley Water Board approved real time salinity management program (RTMP). Participation in an approved RTMP and attainment of salinity and boron water quality objectives constitutes compliance with the Control Program.

As an alternative to WDRs, Reclamation was provided the opportunity to enter into a Management Agency Agreement (MAA) with the Central Valley Water Board to address salt imports from the DMC. In December 2008, an MAA was signed and included provisions to provide mitigation and/or dilution flows to insure that salinity objectives were met at Vernalis, evaluate the feasibility of a RTMP, and facilitate stakeholders' efforts to develop a real time salinity management program.

This item provides a status report on the overall Control Program including: current water quality at Vernalis; activities undertaken as part of the MAA; development of a RTMP framework; and parallel actions to ensure compliance with salinity objectives at Vernalis. It is anticipated that a proposed RTMP and updated MAA will be provided to the Central Valley Water Board for consideration during the summer of 2014.

RECOMMENDATION: None, information item only

¹ The compliance date is 28 July 2018 for critically dry water year types.

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27/28 March 2014
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