

ITEM:

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SUBJECT:

Update on Revised Management Agency Agreement (MAA) with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Development of a Real-Time Salinity Management Program

DISCUSSION:

In September 2004, the Central Valley Water Board adopted the Control Program for Salt and Boron Discharges into the Lower San Joaquin River (the "Control Program"), which is designed to achieve compliance with salinity water quality objectives at Vernalis, the boundary of the Delta.

The Control Program prescribes salt load allocations to seven geographic areas that comprise the LSJR basin and to imported salt from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC), which is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and operated by the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority.

The schedule of compliance for load allocations is phased; areas that contribute the most salt are required to comply first. Non-point-source dischargers on the west side of the LSJR basin and Reclamation are subject to the first compliance date: 28 July 2014¹.

The Control Program allows dischargers to participate in a Central Valley Water Board-approved real-time salinity management program (RTMP) in lieu of meeting prescriptive load allocations. Participation in an approved RTMP, along with attainment of salinity and boron water quality objectives, constitutes compliance with the Control Program.

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, Reclamation and the Central Valley Water Board entered into an MAA that included provisions under which Reclamation would: provide mitigation and/or dilution flows to ensure that salinity objectives were met at Vernalis, evaluate the feasibility of a RTMP, and facilitate stakeholders' efforts to develop a RTMP. Based on studies completed under the 2008 MAA, staff from both agencies concluded that a RTMP was a viable and preferred salt management alternative.

In March 2014, staff from the Central Valley Water Board, Reclamation, and the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority (SJVDA) provided the Board 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.

On 4 June 2014, Central Valley Water Board staff posted a draft revised MAA and draft RTMP framework on our website for public comment. An update was posted indicating that the draft documents would be considered for approval at the October 2014 Board meeting and extending the comment period to 18 August 2014. Both documents reference a Reclamation work plan documenting salinity management

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

activities for the coming federal fiscal year. Reclamation has not yet provided a work plan for public review.

The Board received comments from the San Joaquin Tributary Authority and Stockton East Water District that focused on the need for Reclamation to: take responsibility for mitigating salt loads imported through the DMC; allow the public to review its salt management workplans; and reduce reliance on New Melones Reservoir dilution flows. Staff from the Central Valley Water Board, Reclamation and the SJVDA have updated the draft MAA and RTMP framework based on comments received and the revised MAA is under review by Reclamation.

Staff will discuss the comments received on the draft revised MAA and draft RTMP framework as part of the presentation.

RECOMMENDATION: None, information item only

Mgmt. Review ____

Legal Review __PEP__

9/10 October 2014

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