

Meeting Notes

July 12, 2013 1:00 pm
California Department of Public Health Office (CDPH), Sacramento

Meeting with representatives from:
CDPH Drinking Water Program representatives

Evaluation of the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) Beneficial Use
in Agriculturally Dominated Surface Water Bodies

Attendees:

Central Valley Water Board – Jeanne Chilcott, Anne Littlejohn

California Department of Public Health- Richard Hinrichs (Chief of Northern California Section), Ali Rezvani (Head Engineer for the Sacramento region)

Meeting Summary

1. Project Background

- a. Background information about the overall project to evaluate all the appropriate beneficial uses in agriculturally (Ag) dominated water bodies was provided. Discussion included the directive given to staff following the Central Valley Water Board's 2011 Triennial Review as well as CV-SALT's interest and partnership with the project. The current project is also building off of the work that was done as part of the Inland Surface Water Plan and Ag Water Task Force in the 1990s.
- b. The first phase of the beneficial use evaluation project will focus on Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN). The exceptions in the State Sources of Drinking Water Policy (Resolution 88-63) as well as the blanket designation of the MUN beneficial use in the Central Valley region were discussed.
- c. Staff from the Central Valley Water Board discussed the case studies and monitoring work in the Sacramento River Basin (Cities of Biggs, Colusa, Live Oak and Willows).

2. Update on Project – Proposed Water Body Categorization Approach

- a. Central Valley Water Board staff reviewed the stakeholder preferred alternative of categorizing Ag Dominated Water Bodies and assigning the appropriate MUN beneficial use to the different categories (Limited MUN or de-designation of MUN).

CDPH feedback:

- i. *General consensus with the water body categorization approach. The cost for ground water is much lower in the Sacramento Valley archetype area and overall, there is no compelling reason to think that the cities would look to use the surface Ag water for a drinking water source.*
- ii. *The City of Willows may need to consider surface water supplies in the future if they are not able to meet the new hexavalent chromium standards that are currently under development. However, CDPH's policy is to use the best water available and make it better. Water bodies receiving Ag drainage are not normally considered to be appropriate sources of drinking water.*
- iii. *CDPH does not expect that someone should be able to stick a straw into any surface water and be able to drink it. Their general premise is that surface water should receive treatment before it can be considered safe for drinking.*
- iv. *Surface water treatment plants are very expensive. It is not practical to build one for a water body receiving only seasonal flow. A drinking water source should have sustained flows to make it economically feasible.*
- v. *CDPH has a limited number of permits for seasonal use, but these are due to seasonal populations (e.g. labor camps or summer camps), not seasonal water supply. These permits are not common since seasonal operators are not cheap.*
- vi. *Any use of Ag water would also require additional monitoring of constituents of concern like herbicides and pesticides.*
- vii. *CDPH representatives did not have any suggestions for water quality objectives for the Limited MUN category, but they will continue to consider it and let Central Valley Water Board staff know if they have any further input.*

3. CDPH Policies/Practices

- a. Central Valley Water Board staff asked about general policies and practices at CDPH that could influence or impact this project.

CDPH feedback:

- i. Policies have not always been applied consistently across counties or regions. Every region has its own policies and practices.*
- ii. Some places are still using an old reference that prohibits using a water source for drinking water if it has greater than 5% effluent. However, this is not always the case, and especially in southern California where the water supply is limited, there is increased pressure to make due with less than ideal water supplies. But typically, the practice is to go to the best quality water available and require not less than 20:1 dilution if supply contains effluent.*
- iii. CDPH has the ability to say “no” to a permit request if they feel that a better water source should be used.*
- iv. Looking for waste water contributions upstream is part of the permit review process.*
- v. A state public water system has 15 connections and/or serves 25 people. A public water system must have treatment, operation and maintenance.*
- vi. Counties keep track of smaller surface water systems with typically 5 to 14 connections.*
- vii. If a system has 5 connections or less, it is not considered a state public or small water system and is unregulated. CDPH representatives suggested that Central Valley Water Board staff contact local county building permit offices to determine what steps would be taken by their offices if a single owner wanted to use local surface water for a domestic or drinking water supply.*
- viii. Main regulation is at the point where the water is collected and distributed.*
- ix. CDPH uses the word “conventional” to describe the standard practice of coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, and disinfection.*
- x. There is no general database listing larger water systems and their locations. A mapping tool is in the works, but as of now, the best way to evaluate local intakes is to look at the State Water Resources Control Board’s Water Rights mapping tool.*
- xi. CDPH representatives also suggested contacting the CDPH section chief in charge of the San Joaquin/Tulare Lake region.*