
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP

AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR OCEAN WATERS TO ADDRESS DESALINATION FACILITIES AND BRINE DISPOSAL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff has scheduled a public workshop to provide information about the proposed amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California* (Ocean Plan). The meeting will be held at the location and time specified below.

Monday, September 23, 2013 - 9:00 a.m.
Joe Serna, Jr. Cal/EPA Headquarters Building
Sierra Hearing Room
1001 I Street, Second Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

The focus of this meeting is to present the findings and recommendations of the reconvened Expert Review Panel (ERP) on desalination intake impacts and mitigation. The public will have opportunity to ask questions or provide comments during the meeting.

A quorum of State Water Board members may be present; however, no formal action will be taken by the State Water Board at the workshop.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

State Water Board staff is developing an amendment to the Ocean Plan to address issues associated with desalinization facilities and the disposal of brine discharges. Desalination facilities and brine disposal was discussed as Issue No. 4 in the 2011-2013 Triennial Review Workplan. The issue has been identified as high priority for the State Water Board to address because several new desalination facilities have been planned along the California coast to augment existing potable water supplies.

During the process of ocean desalination, salt and minerals are removed from saltwater to produce freshwater. Other projects, such as brackish groundwater desalination and wastewater treatment/recycling, also generate brine discharges. The salt, minerals, and other compounds are discharged as hyper-saline brine. Brine is denser than the receiving ocean water and, depending on discharge methods, may settle and accumulate on the ocean bottom, where it may have an adverse effect on marine organisms.

Currently, the State Water Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards regulate brine discharges from these types of facilities through the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits that contain conditions protective of aquatic life. However, the Ocean Plan does not yet have an objective for elevated salinity levels in the ocean, nor does it describe how brine discharges are to be regulated and controlled, leading to permitting uncertainty. The Ocean Plan also does not address possible impacts to marine life from intakes for desalination facilities.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

All relevant documents are available electronically on the State Water Board Web site at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/desalination/.

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS

Written comments are not being solicited at this time.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

At this meeting, there will be no sworn testimony or cross-examination of participants. However, the State Water Board and its staff may ask clarifying questions. At the meeting, the expert panel will give an oral presentation. To ensure a productive and efficient public meeting in which all participants have an opportunity to participate, questions may be time-limited.

PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

For directions and parking information, please refer to: <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/EPAbldg/location.htm>

The facilities will be accessible to persons with disabilities. Individuals requiring special accommodations are requested to call (916) 341-5880 at least five working days prior to the meeting. Persons with hearing or speech impairments can contact us by using the California Relay Service Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD). TDD is reachable only from phones equipped with a TDD device. TDD users may contact the California Relay Service, TDD to voice (800) 735-2929, or voice to TDD (800) 735-2922.

The meeting will be webcast live at <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/Broadcast/>. Approximately 15 minutes prior to the event (Pacific Time), the audio and/or video Webcast links will be added, providing a direct audio/video feed from the meeting room. Remember to test your connection prior to connecting to a Webcast.

All visitors are required to sign in and receive a badge prior to attending any meeting in the building. The Visitor and Environmental Services Center is located just inside and to the left of the Joe Serna Jr. Cal/EPA Headquarters Building's public entrance. Valid picture identification may be required due to security requirements. Please allow up to 15 minutes for receiving clearance, and then proceed to the Sierra Hearing Room.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions about this notice to Ms. Shuka Rastegarpour at (916) 341-5576 (srastegarpour@waterboards.ca.gov) or Dr. Maria de la Paz Carpio-Obeso, Chief of the Ocean Unit, at (916) 341-5858 (mcarpio-obeso@waterboards.ca.gov).

September 12, 2013
Date


Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board