
State Water Resources Control Board

February 24, 2012

To: Enclosed Mailing List

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT TECHNICAL APPENDICES TO THE SUBSTITUTE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FOR POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER FLOW AND SOUTHERN DELTA WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES AND THE ASSOCIATED PROGRAM OF IMPLEMENTATION

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has released for public review three draft technical appendices to the substitute environmental document (SED) being prepared in support of potential changes to the San Joaquin River (SJR) flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and the program of implementation for those objectives contained in the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (2006 Bay-Delta Plan).

The 2006 Bay-Delta Plan identifies beneficial uses of water in the Bay-Delta, water quality objectives to protect those uses, and a program of implementation to achieve the water quality objectives. Pursuant to the State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne) and the federal Clean Water Act, the State Water Board is required to regularly review and update the Bay-Delta Plan. The State Water Board initiated the review and update of the 2006 Bay-Delta Plan in 2009 in a phased fashion. The review of the SJR flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and program of implementation was initiated in 2009 and represents the first phase of the State Water Board's review of the 2006 Bay-Delta Plan. Additional information concerning the State Water Board's review of the SJR flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and program of implementation is available at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/bay_delta_plan/water_quality_control_planning/index.shtml.

The subject SED and technical appendices pertain only to the first phase of the State Water Board's review of the 2006 Bay-Delta Plan: SJR flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and the associated program of implementation. In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the SED will identify a reasonable range of alternatives and will evaluate any significant environmental impacts that may be associated with potential changes to the SJR flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and program of implementation and will identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects of these alternatives. The SED will also be prepared in compliance with the requirements of Porter Cologne, including the requirement to consider economics when developing and adopting changes to the Bay-Delta Plan.

The State Water Board plans to release a draft of the entire draft SED in late April. Upon release of the draft SED, the State Water Board will identify a date by which comments on the draft SED, including the three appendices that are being released today, are due. There will not be a separate comment period for these three appendices. The State Water Board is releasing these three draft technical appendices now to give interested parties additional time to review these important technical appendices as they represent some of the very important factors that the State Water Board will need to take into consideration as it balances competing uses of water in its future deliberations.

The three draft technical appendices to the SED cover the following topics:

- Scientific Basis for Alternative San Joaquin River Flow and Southern Delta Salinity Objectives (Scientific Report): This revised draft report describes the scientific information and tools needed to consider potential changes to SJR flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and their associated program of implementation. The draft Scientific Report was first released for public review and comment in October 2010. Today's revised draft has been modified to address the comments received through the peer review which were posted November 2011 at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/bay_delta_plan/water_quality_control_planning/index.shtml
- Agricultural Economic Effects of Lower San Joaquin River Flow Alternatives (Agricultural Economics Report): The analysis in this appendix estimates the potential effects to agricultural production and related sectors of the Lower SJR watershed economy that could occur with changes to surface water diversions resulting from a range of SJR flow alternatives.
- Hydropower and Electric Grid Analysis of Lower San Joaquin River Flow Alternatives (Power Production Report): This appendix analyzes the potential effects on hydropower generation and electric grid reliability in the Lower SJR watershed that could occur under a range of SJR flow alternatives.

The draft technical appendices are posted on the State Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/bay_delta_plan/water_quality_control_planning/index.shtml

The State Water Board is planning to hold a public informational meeting on the Agricultural Economics Report and the Power Production Report on March 21, 2012. State Water Board technical staff and consultants under contract with the State Water Board will describe the general approach taken for each report and will be available to answer clarifying questions. The purpose of this informational meeting is to provide stakeholders an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the structure and content of these two reports that inform the SED analysis. A public notice for the meeting will be forthcoming.

To receive further information regarding the State Water Board's review of the Bay-Delta Plan, interested persons are encouraged to subscribe to the Division of Water Rights' Bay-Delta email list. A subscription ensures prompt receipt of notices related to the State Water Board's Bay-Delta program. The subscription form is located at the following link:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml

If you have any questions regarding these three draft appendices, please contact Kari Kyler at (916) 445-5987, or via email at kkylar@waterboards.ca.gov or Mark Gowdy at (916) 341-5432 or mgowdy@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diane Riddle". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Diane Riddle, Manager
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