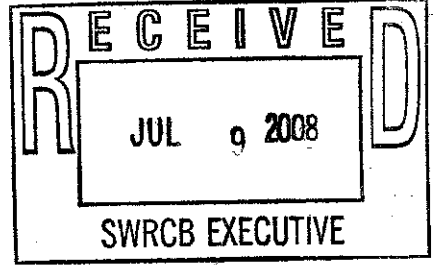




Public Comment
 Bay-Delta Strategic Workplan
 Deadline: 7/9/08 by 12 p.m.

10545 Armstrong Avenue
 Mather, CA 95655
 Tele: [916] 876-6000
 Fax: [916] 876-6160
 Website: www.srcsd.com

July 9, 2008



- Board of Directors**
 Representing:
- County of Sacramento
 - County of Yolo
 - City of Citrus Heights
 - City of Elk Grove
 - City of Folsom
 - City of Rancho Cordova
 - City of Sacramento
 - City of West Sacramento

Ms. Dianne Riddle
 Staff Environmental Scientist
 Hearings and Special Programs Section
 Division of Water Rights
 P.O. Box 2000
 Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Comments on June 2008 Draft Strategic Workplan for Activities in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (District) appreciates the opportunity to provide information to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) for its use in the development of the Strategic Workplan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Workplan) as outlined in SWRCB Resolution No. 2007-0079. The District provides wastewater collection and treatment services to 1.3 million residents of the greater Sacramento area. Our mission is to protect human health and keep the Sacramento River clean and safe. We take our mission very seriously and work on a daily basis to meet our obligations to protect water quality and beneficial uses in the Delta. Our excellent compliance record with our NPDES permit speaks to this commitment and performance.

The District applauds the effort of the SWRCB, and the Bay and Central Valley Regional Boards in preparation of the Workplan. The Workplan outlines some very significant and important work that needs to be completed to protect beneficial uses of waters in the Delta. In the introduction it is stated that "none of the activities described in these elements has a predetermined outcome." This perspective along with the commitment to stakeholder involvement and pursuit of science based decisions is much appreciated.

However, the District is concerned that the efforts in the Workplan may be subject to interference and possibly undermined by other regulatory and political forums that are addressing Delta issues. It is clear that the Water Boards under the authority of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act are responsible for water quality in the State and it is critical that decisions affecting water quality do not bypass the Water Boards. Thus, the District urges the Water Boards to be actively engaged in as many of these forums as possible and make sure the provisions and processes established in State law are followed, particularly those related to public trust, establishing beneficial uses, and setting water quality objectives.

Mary K. Snyder
 District Engineer

Stan R. Dean
 Plant Manager

Wendell H. Kido
 District Manager

Marcia Maurer
 Chief Financial Officer

Environmental Technology in balance with nature

The Workplan does a good job of recognizing that the ecosystem in the Delta is extremely complex and that there are many different factors affecting its health. The Workplan states "Scientists hypothesized that at least three general factors may be acting individually or in concert to lower pelagic productivity: 1) toxic effects; 2) exotic species effects; and 3) water project effects." It is very important that the Water Boards continue to recognize this complexity, seek understanding, and not jump to premature conclusions that direct expenditures in unproductive ways.

The District is concerned about the Water Boards ability to provide sufficient staffing and funding to stay actively engaged in Delta issues. In many of the Workplan tasks, the estimates of required staff and financial support appear to be slim. While there are many priorities for the Water Boards, the District contends that dedication of resources towards Delta issues is of critical importance. In providing funding, it is important to keep in mind that there are many diverse uses and beneficiaries of the Delta, and that everyone has an obligation to participate in developing and implementing solutions.

Overall the Workplan is balanced, well written and includes recommendations from stakeholders. The District's more specific comments on the various sections and elements of the Workplan are outlined below by the following subject areas: Introduction, Background, and Strategic Workplan Elements of Comprehensive Monitoring Program, Water Quality and Contaminants Control, and the Water Use Efficiency for Urban and Agricultural Water Users.

Introduction Section

- On Page 13 under "Comprehensive Review of the Bay Delta Plan, Water Rights and Other Requirements to Protect Fish and Wildlife Beneficial Uses and the Public" the following statement is made: "*New data confirm that a number of fish species are continuing to decline due to water diversions, contaminants, and invasive species.*" The District is not aware of new data that conclusively links contaminants to decline in fish species. It is requested that the data be cited, and if the data is not available, this statement should be re-worded to:

"The areas of concern that are being investigated to determine linkage to the fish species decline are water diversions, contaminants, and invasive species."

- The District supports the efforts of SWRCB through its water rights authority to ensure that methods of diversion for water supply are reasonable and are not significantly impacting fish or other beneficial uses of the Delta. The District also supports SWRCB's use of its water rights authority to ensure that sufficient flows to the Delta and Bay are available to meet water quality objectives and ecosystem habitat requirements.
- On page 21 under the section titled "Criteria for Determining High Priority Activities" and the subheading "Protection of Beneficial Uses", it is requested that the word "reasonable" be inserted prior to the words "beneficial uses".

Background Section

- On page 25 under the section titled "Contaminants in the Bay-Delta" it is stated "Contaminants and other forms of water pollution in the Delta impair wildlife and aquatic life, drinking water and agriculture beneficial uses. Contaminants in water and sediment affect aquatic organisms through direct toxicity or indirectly by reducing habitat suitability, food supply, or fitness. Degraded Delta water quality also adversely affects drinking water quality, requiring users of Delta water to provide advanced treatment and increasing risk to public health." It is suggested that this wording be replaced with the following:

Contaminants and other forms of water pollution in the Delta may impair, or have the potential to affect, wildlife and aquatic life, drinking water and agriculture beneficial uses. Contaminants in water and sediment may affect aquatic organisms through direct toxicity or indirectly by reducing habitat suitability, food supply, or fitness. Degraded Delta water quality may affect drinking water quality, requiring users of Delta water to provide advanced treatment and increasing risk to public health."

This section would also be a good place to discuss the listing of Delta waters as impaired under the Clean Water Act, section 303(d) and the resulting TMDL process to address waters listed as impaired. This section should also clarify that none of the 303(d) listings in the Delta are due to impairment to drinking water.

- On page 25 heavy metals are referred to as an emergent contaminant in the Delta that could impact beneficial uses. What heavy metals are impacting beneficial uses of the Delta? Data from the Sacramento River Watershed Monitoring Program has shown that heavy metals are not impacting beneficial uses in the Sacramento River Watershed.

Comprehensive Monitoring Program Workplan Element

One of the key elements of the Workplan is establishment of a comprehensive monitoring program. The District believes that this is a very important effort that should move forward. However, careful consideration needs to be given to the governance structure to make sure that it is supported by both State regulators and the regulated community. This type of support is fundamental to bringing water quality data under one umbrella so that the benefits of a comprehensive program can be realized. Such benefits include elimination of duplicative water quality data collection efforts, improved quality control of water quality data, elimination of conflicting data sets, and improved coordination in the timing of collecting samples. Because the District places such importance on a comprehensive monitoring program we are providing the following specific comments.

- The short term effort to identify parties with monitoring programs should include past and present efforts. The Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) has collected data from 1996-2006, but is currently not sampling due to a lack of funding.

- We encourage the Water Boards to not only coordinate among various existing monitoring programs to integrate contaminants monitoring, but truly establish an umbrella framework governing all monitoring efforts that can be funded without the reliance on grants and state funding.
- On page 60 it is stated that "The Sacramento River Watershed Program and the Central Valley Clean Water Association also have partnered to develop a pilot RMP for the lower Sacramento River." To better describe the Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) it is suggested that this wording be replaced with the following:

"The Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) has an established monitoring program for the entire Sacramento River watershed that has existed since 1996, and recently is not collecting data due to a lack of permanent funding. The SRWP is still coordinating with the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, Sacramento County Department of Water Resources, and the City of Sacramento Department of Utilities, who have collaborated since the early 1990's to support the ongoing efforts related to the Sacramento Coordinated Monitoring Program. The Coordinated Monitoring Program collects water quality information on the lower American and Sacramento River."

Additionally a discussion of the San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program should be included along with the discussion on monitoring programs for the tributaries to the Delta. These various monitoring programs should be evaluated collectively, and with stakeholder input, as resources for evaluating options for management of a Delta Regional Monitoring Program.

- In developing a plan for a regional monitoring program the District encourages that the State strive for a comprehensive program, rather than limiting the scope to selected beneficial uses and water quality parameters. If the scope is too limited, it may prematurely focus solutions without a full understanding of the ecosystem.
- The focus for a regional monitoring program in the Delta appears to be for contaminants, and the District encourages the Water Boards to keep monitoring data for ecosystem health and water supply together when discussing a regional monitoring program.
- The District is encouraged by the stakeholder involvement activities planned for a regional monitoring program development and looks forward to participating in the process.

Water Quality and Contaminants Control Element

- On page 40, the schedule for the Regional Board to consider the Delta Mercury TMDL is overly ambitious considering a third party facilitated stakeholder input process is being initiated. The District's experience with stakeholder processes has shown that increased time is necessary when involving all interests, but the final product is much better.

Ms. Dianne Riddle
July 9, 2008
Page 5 of 5

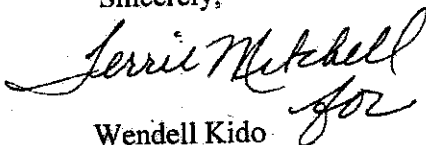
- On page 54, under "Activities, Products, and Timeline:" a fate and transport study of ammonia in the Sacramento River/Bay-Delta should be included as an activity. Conducting laboratory studies on ammonia affects is important, but to fully understand the relationship to actual ecosystem changes it is necessary to understand how ammonia is transported from both wastewater and agricultural sources, and cycles as it moves through the Delta.

Water Use Efficiency for Urban and Agricultural Water Users Element

- On page 84 the statement in the "Background" of the Water Use Efficiency Element that water recycling within the Delta Watershed may have minimal net water supply benefit due to reduced return flows from wastewater should be removed. The more recycled water is used to augment water supplies in the Delta area the less surface water is removed from the system.
- The draft Workplan notes that the State should review existing State and Federal regulations and guidelines, and then develop storage requirements and operational guidelines for both surface water and groundwater to support indirect potable use of recycled water. The District is supportive of appropriately treated recycled water for use in groundwater basin recharge and encourages the Water Boards to develop guidelines that encourage recycled water reuse for groundwater basin recharge.

We hope the State and Regional Water Boards will consider the above comments as they continue activities to implement the Workplan. As always, the District stands ready to participate in the process, and appreciates the effort the Water Boards have put forward to involve stakeholder's participation in this process. Thank you again for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,



Wendell Kido
District Manager

cc: Tam Doduc – California State Water Resources Control Board
Pamela Creedon, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Linda Adams – California Environmental Protection Agency
Mike Chrisman – The California Resources Agency
Lester Snow – California Department of Water Resources
Debbie Webster – Central Valley Clean Water Association
John Kirlin - Delta Vision Executive Director
Mary Snyder – District Engineer, SRCSD
Stan Dean – Plant Manager, SRCSD
Terrie Mitchell – Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager, SRCSD