

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGIONAL BOARD
MARCH 16, 2021**

ITEM 3

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED RESOLUTION APPROVING A NON-REGULATORY AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION TO UPDATE BACTERIA WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR WATERS DESIGNATED FOR WATER CONTACT RECREATION

DISCUSSION

On September 3, 2020, the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Colorado River Basin Water Board) adopted [Resolution R7-2020-0028](#), updating bacteria water quality objectives for water contact recreation (REC I) in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region (Basin Plan).

The amendment updates the region's Basin Plan to reflect statewide bacteria objectives adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) on August 8, 2018 as [Resolution No. 2018-0038](#), *Part 3 of the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California – Bacteria Provisions and a Water Quality Standards Variance Policy and an Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California – Bacteria Provisions and a Water Quality Standards Variance Policy* (Statewide Bacteria Provisions). These numeric objectives are already effective statewide and supersede the objectives listed in the region's Basin Plan, except for site-specific objectives and narrative water quality objectives. Resolution No. 2018-0038 was approved by the Office of Administrative Law on February 4, 2019 and U.S. EPA on March 22, 2019.

The Statewide Bacteria Provisions adopted by the State Water Board are based on U.S. EPA's 2012 recreational water quality criteria recommendations found in Clean Water Act section 304(a). For inland surface waters, bays, and estuaries, the objectives designate bacterial indicators for fresh water and saltwater as *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) and enterococci, respectively. The updated objectives are more protective of human health and based on a risk protection level of 32 illnesses per 1,000 recreators and lowers the numeric objectives in accordance. A new beneficial use definition for limited water contact recreation (LREC I) is included and can be designated for applicable water bodies. Options for implementation pertaining to natural sources and physical conditions are included for possible use by the regional water boards.

The Colorado River Basin Water Board's amendment revises the Basin Plan to reflect the new statewide bacteria objectives already in effect for waters designated for REC I, but does not change narrative water quality objectives or site-specific objectives already in place. By removing outdated objectives from the Basin Plan, the amendment will eliminate any confusion for users as to which REC I numeric objectives for bacteria

apply to surface waters in the Colorado River Basin Region. Additionally, site-specific objectives for bacteria in the Colorado River are moved to a different section of the Basin Plan and a new beneficial use definition for LREC I is included.

POLICY ISSUE

Should the State Water Board approve the non-regulatory amendment to the Basin Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region to update numeric bacteria water quality objectives for REC I waters, as adopted by Colorado River Basin Water Board Resolution R7-2020-0028?

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no expected fiscal impact from the non-regulatory amendment since the Statewide Bacteria Provisions are already in effect.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

Approval of Colorado River Basin Water Board Resolution R7-2020-0028 will amend and update the region's Basin Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the State Water Board approve the proposed Resolution.