

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
RESOLUTION NO. 81-54

APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE
NORTH COASTAL BASIN (1B) TO REVISE THE ACTION PLAN FOR POINT SOURCE
DISCHARGES TO HUMBOLDT BAY AND MAD RIVER

WHEREAS:

1. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region adopted the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coastal Basin (1B) on March 20, 1975. The plan was amended in 1976, 1977, and 1979. The plan and its amendments have been approved by the State Water Resources Control Board and the Environmental Protection Agency.
2. The plan as amended describes the development of the Humboldt Bay Wastewater Authority (HBWA) and its plan to design, finance, construct, and operate a system of interceptors, pump stations, treatment plant, and ocean outfall to consolidate all sewage from its five member entities for treatment and disposal.
3. On May 17, 1979, the State Water Resources Control Board concluded a process of public hearings, workshops, and analysis with adoption of its Order No. WQ 79-20. The conclusions reached in State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 79-20 state:

"(1) The Bays and Estuaries Policy is reasonable and appropriate for the protection of water quality and beneficial uses in Humboldt Bay; however, there is a reasonable probability that those entities currently discharging into the Bay could demonstrate that the discharge of secondarily treated, disinfected and dechlorinated effluent would adequately protect the bacterial quality of the Bay. It is further concluded that projects such as the proposed Arcata Marsh treatment process may enhance Humboldt Bay waters, as required by the Bays and Estuaries Policy.

"(2) The proposed HBWA regional facility is a cost-effective solution to the water quality problems of Humboldt Bay; however, due to the widespread controversy and local opposition to the proposed regional project, its timely and full implementation appears unlikely.

"(3) Therefore, the Board will consider other proposals, including those involving a Bay discharge, as a solution to the water quality issues in the Bay, provided that such alternatives:

- (a) provide for full secondary treatment, with disinfection and dechlorination, of effluent;
- (b) comply with all NPDES permit requirements issued by the RWQCB for the protection of beneficial uses; and

- (c) create new beneficial uses or result in the fuller realization of existing beneficial uses, such as the creation of additional marshlands."

Moreover, SWRCB Order No. WQ 79-20 directed the involved local entities and the Regional Board to prepare and consider alternatives to the HBWA project according to a rigorous time schedule which would conclude with compliance with all water quality standards by July 1, 1983.

- 4. SWRCB Order No. WQ 79-20 required the HBWA members to complete all planning activities for alternative project concepts by October 1, 1980.
- 5. Alternative concept planning has been undertaken by four entities:
 - o The McKinleyville Community Services District.
 - o The City of Arcata.
 - o The Greater Eureka Area JPA (City of Eureka, County of Humboldt, and Humboldt Community Services District); and
 - o Redwoods Junior College District.

While all planning activities, including enhancement studies, called for in Order 79-20 have not yet been completed, the HBWA members have shown diligence and are proceeding to complete the necessary studies.

- 6. The McKinleyville alternative concept differs from that contained in the IB Basin Plan as follows:
 - a. The sewage collected in McKinleyville will be treated in an oxidation pond system; not in the proposed HBWA project.
 - b. Treated wastewater will be discharged to Mad River during wet weather high-dilution periods and to land application/storage facilities during most of each year; it will not be discharged directly to the ocean.
- 7. The Arcata alternative concept differs from the Basin Plan as follows:
 - a. Sewage collected within Arcata will be treated at the Arcata Standard Treatment Plant site, not in the proposed HBWA facility.
 - b. The Arcata Standard Treatment Plant will be modified to improve reliability and performance; it will not be abandoned.
 - c. Treated wastewater will be discharged to Humboldt Bay until an alternative discharge concept (marsh, injection well, land, Mad River and/or ocean) is selected and constructed; ocean discharge via the proposed HBWA project will not occur.

8. The Greater Eureka Area alternative concept differs from the Basin Plan as follows:
 - a. Sewage collected in City of Eureka, Humboldt CSD, and County Service Area No. 3 will be conveyed via existing or newly constructed interceptors and pump stations to the Murray Street Standard Treatment Plant for interim treatment; it will not be pumped across the bay to the Samoa site.
 - b. The Hill Street Standard Treatment Plant, McCullens Avenue Standard Treatment Plant, King Salmon Standard Treatment Plant, Sea View Manor Standard Treatment Plant, and Fields Landing Standard Treatment Plant will be abandoned; Murray Street Standard Treatment Plant (primary) will remain on-line until new Standard Treatment Plant is constructed; the proposed HBWA project will not be built.
 - c. The Murray Street Standard Treatment Plant will be modified to improve interim service performance and reliability.
 - d. A new, secondary-level Standard Treatment Plant will be constructed at the Elk River site.
 - e. Treated wastewater will be discharged to ebb tide flows near the mouth of Humboldt Bay at such times as the ebbing flow will convey the waste into the ocean; the outfall and diffuser structures will be within the bay, not in the ocean as proposed for the HBWA project.
 - f. Treated wastewater will be provided to enhance the restoration and management of wetlands adjacent to the Elk River site.
9. On November 20, 1980, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted Resolution No. 80-87. The resolution states that:
 - "1. The proposed Greater Eureka Area project with discharge only on ebb tide at a point near the mouth of Humboldt Bay is found to be consistent with the intent of the State's Water Quality Control Policy for the Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California.
 - "2. In making this finding, it is the Board's understanding that at least secondary treatment will be provided by Greater Eureka Area Project."
10. The Redwoods Junior College District alternative concept may differ from the Basin Plan as follows:
 - a. Sewage may be treated at the existing Standard Treatment Plant; it may not be conveyed to CSA-3 for management in the Greater Eureka system.
 - b. The discharge may be discharged to land and/or to the bay (subject to "enhancement" requirement).

11. The Water Code and Administrative Code each require that all waste discharge requirements and Clean Water Grant Projects implement the relevant basin plans. Thus, the North Coastal Basin Plan must be amended to recognize changes in facility concepts before grants are approved and requirements are adopted.
12. On September 30, 1980 the Regional Board noticed its intent to conduct a public hearing to consider proposed amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coastal Basin (1B) regarding the Action Plan for Point Source Discharges to Humboldt Bay and Mad River.

The Board staff conducted a public workshop regarding the proposed amendments in Eureka on October 22, 1980.

The Regional Board conducted a public hearing on December 4, 1980 to receive and consider testimony on this matter.

13. The Regional Board Staff Report "Proposed Amendments to the Action Plan for Point Source Discharges to Humboldt Bay, September 30, 1980; the tentative text of Resolution No. 80-21 and environmental documentation (including reference to Environmental Impact Reports prepared by each of the project proponents) which are functionally equivalent to the California Environmental Quality Act requirements, were transmitted to interested individuals and agencies for review and comment.
14. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, has reviewed and carefully considered all comments and testimony received relative to the proposed amendment of the Action Plan for Point Source Discharges to Humboldt Bay and Mad River. The Board has determined that the proposed amendments will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.
15. On December 4, 1980 the Regional Board, by Resolution No. 80-21, adopted amendments providing that the text of the Water Quality Control plan for the North Coastal Basin (1B) Abstract Report (page 22) and Full Report Part I (page I-5-z) as amended by Order No. 76-94, be supplemented by the summary, references and conclusions as contained in the Regional Board's Resolution No. 80-21 (copy attached).
16. A copy of Resolution No. 80-21, of pertinent information, and of the record for the proposed amendment were forwarded for review to the State Board for consideration for approval.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The State Board, after consideration of the record before it, has determined that, the amendment to the Action Plan for Humboldt Bay and Mad River is consistent with the intent of State Board Resolution No. 79-20.

2. Pursuant to Section 13245 of the Water Code, the State Board approves the amendments as adopted by the Regional Board in Resolution No. 80-21.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, Executive Director of the State Water Resources Control Board, does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Resources Control Board held on May 21, 1981.



Clint Whitney
Executive Director