STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
RESOLUTION NO. 2008-0048

PROMOTING STRATEGIES TO ASSIST
SMALL AND/OR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES WITH WASTEWATER NEEDS

WHEREAS:

1. Small and/or disadvantaged communities are often located in sparsely-populated, rural areas and cannot provide the economies of scale necessary to build and maintain adequate water and wastewater systems;
2. Many small and/or disadvantaged communities are on failing septic systems or have old and undersized wastewater treatment plants that cannot meet current water quality standards;
3. Such systems can cause significant health and safety problems, endanger surface water uses, and pose a threat to groundwater supplies;
4. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is committed to addressing the human health and water pollution problems associated with small and/or disadvantaged communities, especially in cases where these problems present an environmental injustice;
5. Many small and/or disadvantaged communities lack the resources and in-house expertise necessary to apply for grants and loans to help make wastewater projects more feasible, and often do not have the technical expertise to determine the best project alternative or to appropriately plan and manage long-term operations and maintenance (O&M) needs;
6. The State Water Board recognizes the lack of funding currently available to small and/or disadvantaged communities for wastewater projects, since all Small Community Wastewater Grant Program funds are committed;
7. More financial and technical assistance is needed to bring small and/or disadvantaged communities into compliance;
8. State Water Board staff are working with existing community-based nonprofit organizations, that are able to provide valuable technical, managerial, and financial assistance to small and/or disadvantaged communities, to determine how the State Water Board can assist their efforts;
9. State Water Board staff are working with staff from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), and others to identify opportunities to leverage resources; and
10. State Water Board staff, in coordination with Regional Water Quality Control Boards staffs, has developed the *Small Community Wastewater Strategy*, which provides an overview of the problems faced by small and/or disadvantaged communities and proposes solutions to address those problems.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The State Water Board directs staff to take all of the following actions:

1. Make the following modifications to the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program to create a more affordable funding source for small and/or disadvantaged community wastewater projects:
    a. By September 2008, evaluate extended term SRF financing options for small and/or disadvantaged communities and report to the State Water Board;
    b. By December 2008, refine procedures to process and make disbursements to small and/or disadvantaged community financial assistance recipients within 30 days of submittal of a complete disbursement request; and
    c. By August 2009, develop SRF Program Regulations that will allow the State Water Board to provide financing at a reduced rate to small and/or disadvantaged communities;
2. By December 2008, distribute the Wastewater User Survey with comprehensive questions to evaluate small and/or disadvantaged wastewater affordability. Determine response rate and provide recommendations to the State Water Board for the next survey;
3. Identify new and supplemental funding sources, particularly to provide technical and compliance assistance support for small and/or disadvantaged communities. Review the State Water Board's Cleanup and Abatement Account (CAA) as part of the current Enforcement Policy Update and recommend any appropriate CAA changes to support small and/or disadvantaged communities;
4. By December 2008, identify, quantify, and prioritize statewide small and/or disadvantaged community technical and financial assistance needs. Update the list of communities in need of assistance, track the status of necessary wastewater compliance projects (planning phase, design phase, etc.), and estimate cost to construct those projects;
5. Work with existing community-based nonprofit organizations that support small and/or disadvantaged communities to determine how the State Water Board can best assist their efforts;
6. By July 2009, work with CDPH staff and community-based nonprofits to identify opportunities to leverage drinking water and wastewater resources within high priority small and/or disadvantaged communities, and encourage funding for projects that address those needs;
7. Encourage regional approaches to solving wastewater problems, when feasible, and to evaluate alternative regulatory mechanisms and potential financial assistance incentive programs, such as reduced interest rate financing, to encourage counties to pro-actively address small and/or disadvantaged community wastewater problems;
8. By February 2009, make available to interested parties, a template Memorandum of Understanding or Joint Powers Agreement to share small and/or disadvantaged community wastewater responsibilities with a larger entity (city, county, etc.);

9. By December 2009, develop a statewide template for Waste Discharge Requirements, with standard language requiring proper O&M of municipal wastewater systems;
10. Coordinate with CDPH, DWR, USDA, U.S. EPA, and others to provide better coordinated assistance to small and/or disadvantaged communities throughout California; and
11. Report annually as requested by the State Water Board, beginning July 2009, on progress made pursuant to this Resolution and any recommendations for additional activities to assist small and/or disadvantaged communities with wastewater compliance.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, Clerk to the 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 Board held on July 1, 2008.

AYE:	Chair Tam M. Doduc Arthur G. Baggett, Jr. Charles R. Hoppin Frances Spivy-Weber
NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Vice Chair Gary Wolff, P.E., Ph.D
ABSTAIN:	None

Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board